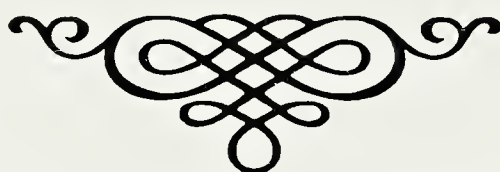


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Religious tendencies of the times, or, How
deal with the deadly errors and dangerous



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THE RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES OF
THE TIMES.

THE RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES
OF THE TIMES;

OR,

HOW TO DEAL WITH
THE DEADLY ERRORS AND DANGEROUS
DELUSIONS OF THE DAY.

✓
BY JAMES GRANT,

AUTHOR OF "GOD IS LOVE," "OUR HEAVENLY HOME,"
"SEASONS OF SOLITUDE," ETC., ETC.

SECOND THOUSAND.

LONDON:
WILLIAM MACINTOSH, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

I REMARKED in the preface to one of my former works, that were I to consult my own natural inclinations, I would never enter the domain of religious controversy. Nothing could be more uncongenial to my taste ; but there are seasons when one's feelings must be subordinated to an imperative sense of duty. The conviction presses on my mind with an overpowering force, that the present is one of those seasons. Never was there a period in the annals of Christianity in which the religion of Jesus was exposed to so many and such fierce assaults from its foes. Moral forces, which are in irreconcilable antagonism

on all other points, display a wonderful unanimity in showing their deadly dislike of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Everywhere, and at all points, Christianity has to do battle with the most powerful confederacies it ever before had to confront. Many, too, of the foes who constitute this combination are utterly unscrupulous in the modes of conflict to which they resort. They carry on their hostilities in entire disregard of those principles of honourable warfare which hitherto, with few exceptions, have characterized the attacks which, from the days of Julian downward to our own day, have been made on the gospel of Christ, by those who have sought to banish it from the world.

It is one of the great characteristics of the warfare which is now carried on against the religion of the gospel, that its most determined and most dangerous assailants are those who profess to be its friends. Christianity's most inveterate foes are fighting against her in close contiguity to her own standard. We have, it is true,

many avowed infidels—men who would feel affronted if they were to be called Christians of any kind,—who are engaged in the conflict. We have Pantheists, like Mr. Carlyle—men who acknowledge no God but Nature—doing their best to vanquish and crush the religion of Christ; but it is due to them to state that they are at least open enemies. They are not to be seen on the battle-field in proximity to the spot where the banner of the religion of Jesus is unfurled. On the contrary, so far from professing to be fighting for the faith of the gospel, they proclaim to all the world that they seek the destruction of Christianity. Mr. Carlyle, as the leader of one of these detachments of the enemies of the Cross, has, in his latest work, “Shooting Niagara,” expressed his conviction that, before fifty more years have elapsed, Christianity will cease to have even a nominal existence. Before half a century has passed away, he confidently asserts, it will no longer have even a name as a living thing, but must be sought for, if it is

at all to be found, only in the page of history.

It is not the class of foes of which Mr. Carlyle is a representative, nor, indeed, any class of foes who openly glory in their uncompromising hostility to our faith, who are to be regarded with the greatest alarm. The enemies whom we have most to dread are those enemies of Christ's religion, who, all the while, are fighting in the uniform of our Divine Captain.

The cause of our common Christianity is at this hour suffering most severely at the hands of traitors in the camp. The sympathizers with Colenso, Stanley, Maurice, and the Rationalists as a body, are the men who have done most of late, and are doing still more at this very moment, to mar the visage and mangle the body of the gospel of Christ. Christianity is being grievously maltreated by those who profess themselves to be her loyal and loving disciples. She is suffering now, as she never suffered before, from the wounds inflicted by the hands of professed friends. She is

betrayed—as our Lord Himself was by Judas—by traitors bearing the name of Christ's disciples.

The mode of warfare which these Christian-infidels—if there be not a contradiction in the terms—adopt in the battle in which they are engaged with all that constitutes the life and glory of the gospel of Christ, is to labour to destroy its grand distinctive doctrines, by taking them *seriatim*, and by assigning to each of the leading foes of our faith the task of dealing with those parts of the Christian system with which particular persons are most conversant, and with which, consequently, they are most qualified to grapple. In the “Essays and Reviews” we had a striking illustration of the purpose to which this principle of the division of labour has been turned by the semi-infidel party, still calling themselves by the Christian name. Another exemplification of a similar kind has just occurred by the publication of a Rationalist work, under the editorial auspices of the Rev. Mr.

Clay of Bamhill, Lancashire,—a work to which a special reference will be found in this volume, under the heading of “The Duration of Future Punishments.”

But it is not in concerted and systematic combination only, that these traitors in the Christian camp are fighting the battle of infidelity. They apply the principle of division of labour after another fashion. They do battle by means of other weapons of warfare. They publish separate books, each author taking up a special subject, in their assaults on the fortress of our faith in Christ and his religion. Dr. Colenso undertook, by his elaborate work, to destroy all confidence in the authenticity and authority of the Scriptures. Dean Stanley has, in several of his publications, laboured with an ingenuity and a zeal which could hardly be surpassed, to destroy all belief in the cardinal doctrine of the Atonement,—without which doctrine the gospel is no gospel at all. Mr. Maurice’s special department in this division of labour, has been to

endeavour with all his might to insure the universal rejection of the doctrine that the punishment of those living and dying in their sins, will be of eternal duration.

Mr. Maurice has been assisted by many others, like-minded with himself, in his endeavours to banish from the Christian world the belief in the eternity of future punishment; and his and their labours—I say it with great heaviness of heart—have been successful to a deplorable extent.

I am fully persuaded that the great majority of those who still hold the doctrine that there will be no termination to the misery of the lost, have no idea of the extent to which the contrary belief prevails. And the conviction that there will be no punishment at all for sin in another world, or that it will be of limited duration, is still making astounding progress. On this point there is no room whatever for doubt. I know of no fact in the realms of religion that can be better established than this unhappily can. Evidence will be found in the body of my book, so ample in

amount, and so conclusive in its nature, to prove the statement, that no one who reads what I have written can have any doubts on the subject.

And what adds greatly to the gravity of the fact, is that the disbelief in the eternity of future punishment is no longer confined to the Rationalist school of divines, or the Neological portion the laity, but that it has found a firm and extensive footing among the evangelical sections of our various denominations. I could name many of our most popular evangelical clergymen in the metropolis, who never preach the doctrine of the eternity of misery in the world to come because they do not believe in it. Not long ago a small number of evangelical clergymen, with some laymen, met together at the West-end, as they often do, for the interchange of their views on religious subjects, and it was ascertained, to the surprise of each, because, hitherto all had concealed their opinions on the point, that every one, though formerly believing in the endlessness of the perdition of the un-

godly, had abandoned that portion of their theological faith. But a yet more startling proof of the extent to which the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment is rejected, will be found in a fact furnished to me within the last few months. The gentleman to whom I am indebted for the information, and who attained high scholastic honours at Cambridge, was rejected some twenty years ago by one of our present archbishops, then a bishop, when he applied for ordination. The sole ground of refusal to ordain him was frankly stated to be, that he did not believe—which the applicant candidly admitted to be the fact—in the eternity of future punishment. In the course of the present year, this same gentleman chanced to meet with the archbishop to whom I allude, and recurring to the circumstance, said to him, “Twenty years ago you refused to ordain me, because I confessed that I did not believe in eternal punishments, and now there are comparatively few clergymen within your jurisdiction who preach that doctrine.” The

archbishop received the remark with a sort of smile, but did not deny its truth.

If we pass from the evangelical section of the Church of England to the evangelical Nonconformist denominations, we shall find that matters are, in this respect, equally bad. While several Congregationalist and Baptist ministers boldly preach either that the wicked will all be annihilated at death, or the judgment, or after a prolonged period of suffering in the world to come; or that all will ultimately, after a longer or shorter term of punishment, be restored to holiness and happiness, and received to heaven, to be for ever and ever in the abodes of bliss and of glory,—I maintain, as the result of a full and careful inquiry into the subject, that, in the majority of cases among the Congregationalists and Baptists, the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment is *not* preached. Rationalism, in all its varied forms, is rife in our Nonconformist pulpits; and a disbelief in the endless duration of the misery of the wicked, where any future punishment is

believed in at all, is an essential part of that semi-infidel system.

As regards the students in our Congregational colleges, and those young ministers who have lately come out as preachers from them, the *Spectator* a few months back challenged the *English Independent*, the recognised organ of the Congregationalists, to deny, if it could, the charge preferred against the great majority of their number, of belonging to the Rationalist school of theologians. That challenge was not accepted. The charge remains unanswered till the present hour. The tone and tendencies of several of the leading organs in the periodical literature of the Congregationalists compel us to come to the same conclusion. While some of the number content themselves with studiously excluding from their pages the inculcation of the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment, others advance a step further, and warmly commend, without any, or a very modified qualification, books which are avowedly written for the purpose of deny-

ing and deriding the doctrine, that punishments in the world to come will be eternal in their duration. A special reference will be made towards the end of this volume to a notice in the *British Quarterly Review*, of one of Dr. George Macdonald's recent works of fiction, in which the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments is assailed in every variety of form. What makes this circumstance all the more deplorable is, that one of the editors of that periodical is Theological Professor in a Congregational college. In another Congregational college there is at least one of the professors who is well known to be deeply tainted by the Rationalist theology, including the denial of everlasting punishment. What wonder then—how, indeed, could it be otherwise—that the students in those colleges should come out, in the capacity of preachers, as disbelievers in this doctrine, and with semi-infidel principles in general.

Matters are no better in some of our Baptist colleges. I speak from the testimony of a young man of high character and

eminent piety, who had been for a considerable time in one of these institutions, and who was compelled to leave, in obedience to the requirements of conscience, because of the abounding errors on vitally important subjects,—the denial of the eternity of future punishment being among the number,—which prevail among the students of the college to which I refer. It is due to the head of the institution in question, to say that he is thoroughly sound in the faith. The young gentleman to whom I allude was most earnest in the expression of his desire that I should not fall into any misconception on this latter point. The anxiety was not needed in my case, because I was fully cognizant of the fact that his creed is as thoroughly evangelical as he is eminent for the greatness of his gifts as a Theological Tutor.

The latest avowed accession of any note which the opponents of the non-eternity of future punishments have received to their ranks, is in the person of the Rev. Samuel Minton, Incumbent of Eaton Square Chapel.)

There are peculiar circumstances in Mr. Minton's case, which have induced me to advert to it at considerable length in one of my chapters on "The Doctrine of Annihilation." Mr. Minton's views of that doctrine are the most awful, and let me add, the most repulsive, of any form in which the doctrine of Destruction has ever yet been presented to the human mind. Instead of believing that the wicked will be annihilated at death, as many suppose; or immediately after the general judgment, as perhaps still more feel convinced they will be, —Mr. Minton has embraced the doctrine of the complete and eternal destruction, both of body and soul, of the ungodly, after they have endured torments immeasurably more terrible than the mind can conceive for, it may be, countless ages. He is willing to concede, to those who believe in the endless duration of misery in the world to come, a period of the most appalling agonies of body and anguish of soul, extending to "ages on ages," to use his own words, —only maintaining that the wicked will

be annihilated at last. All that he asks is that he should not be called on to believe in the eternity of misery in the world to come. If I must make a choice of some of the various theories which are substituted for the doctrine of the endless duration of future punishment, give me the theory of annihilation at death, or the theory of annihilation immediately after the judgment, or the Universalist hypothesis of ultimate restoration to holiness, happiness, and admission to heaven. As I have said in dealing with Mr. Minton's arguments in his newly published work on the subject, "The Glory of Christ in the Creation, and Reconciliation of All Things," there is something so utterly unlike the character of God, and so awfully dishonouring to Him, in the belief that He will gratuitously subject his creatures to the most terrible tortures through an indefinitely prolonged period in the world to come, and then entirely and for ever destroy them, both body and soul,—that I cannot bring myself to think of such a belief without a revulsion

of mind which no language which I could employ could adequately express. In regard to eternal punishment, I have endeavoured to show that there are reasons, in the holiness and justice of God, and the vindication of his own sovereignty as the Supreme Ruler of the universe, why the misery of lost souls in a future state, should never have a termination.

I speak with a thorough conviction of the truth of what I say, when I affirm that those who have come to the conclusion that future punishments will not be eternal, do assume, in almost every instance, that conclusion, not from the statements of Scripture, but from the substitution of their own feelings for what the law and testimony say on the subject. Instead of submitting with humility to the utterances of the Word of God, in relation to the destiny of the wicked in the world to come, and bringing their own feelings into subjection to the volume of inspiration, they first of all resign themselves to the dictates of their feelings, and then so interpret the

holy oracles as to make them accord with the conclusions to which they have come. They presumptuously erect themselves into judges, guided only by their feelings, as to what God may or may not do in his dealings, in a future state, with those who have lived and died in their sins ; and then resolutely refuse to listen to the plain teachings of the Bible on the subject. They thus deliberately incur the awful guilt of deciding what must be the principles on which God will administer his moral government, so far as relates to the wicked, in that state of being which succeeds the present. This is practically setting themselves up as above God,—as being wiser than God. *They* are, in effect, to be—not Jehovah—the arbiters of the destiny of the ungodly in the world to come. I have given, in my last chapter on Annihilation, an illustration of what is the almost universal feeling of those who reject the doctrine of everlasting punishments. In the presence of a clergyman well known for his writings, and of several other persons,

a friend of mine—a person of position in society—not long ago declared, in the most emphatic manner, that he would not believe in the doctrine of eternal punishments were an angel that moment to descend visibly from heaven, and declare in an audible voice the doctrine to be true. Neither the clergyman alluded to, nor any of the other persons who were present, dissented, either from the sentiment itself, or from the language in which it was expressed. Mr. Minton says precisely the same thing, though in different phraseology. He broadly declares that no amount of evidence would make him believe in the eternity of evil, although at his ordination he took what was practically a solemn oath that he *did* believe in everlasting punishments; and not only so, but for a long series of years afterwards professed to regard that doctrine as one of vital importance in the Christian system.

It is, I repeat, in this state of mind that men reject the doctrine of eternal punishment. Of course it were useless to reason

with such persons. If they would not believe an angel, supposing one visibly to descend from heaven, and, in an audible voice, declare the doctrine of endless misery in a future state to be true; or would not believe in the doctrine on *any* amount of evidence whatever, that could be, given in its favour,—it were a mere waste of words in me to engage in any course of argument with them. I appeal to those only who recognize the authority of the Scriptures, and are willing to abide by their utterances. These parties, I repeat, make their own feelings, instead of the Bible, the test and standard of truth. They are in the position of those of whom Christ spoke on a memorable occasion. They will not hear the Word of God, just as the Jews would not, of whom our Lord said,—“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

Thus far I have chiefly spoken of the prevalence of the disbelief in the eternity of future punishment, as one of the la-

mentable signs of the times in which we live, in relation to the religion of Christ. But the prevalence of that dangerous error—an error which, as I mentioned before, is still making rapid progress in our evangelical denominations—is, I say it with deep sorrow of soul, only one of many destructive errors which prevail, and are still rapidly spreading.

There is not a single fundamental doctrine of the Gospel which is not at this hour fiercely and pertinaciously assailed from the pulpits, and from a large portion of the religious press of the land. But the one great point to which the concentrated attacks of these traitors to the cause of Christian truth are directed, is the inspiration of the Scriptures. They are sufficiently wise in their generation to know that if the inspiration and consequent authority of the Bible can be disproved, the foundation of the evangelical system will be destroyed, and then Christianity as a spiritual religion will fall to the ground.

Within the last few months those who

regard the Scriptures as constituting a special revelation from God, have been surprised and grieved at finding that the foes of the inspiration of the Bible have received an accession to their ranks from a quarter they would have least expected. The Rev. Dr. Raleigh, in his capacity of President of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, delivered, in April last, an able and elaborate Inaugural Address, in which he asserts that there are mistakes in the Bible, —not errors of translation only, but *mistakes*. And strange and sad to say, so far from any of the large number of Congregationalist ministers who were present, including the leading men belonging to the Congregational body, rising to express their dissent from so grave a statement on the part of their President, they received Dr. Raleigh's address with marked applause. At first, I was greatly gratified at finding *The English Independent*, the recognized weekly organ of the Congregational body, entering its protest against Dr. Raleigh's heterodox views relative to the inspiration

of the Scriptures, but that gratification was only of short duration ; for in a few weeks. *The English Independent* became a proselyte to Dr. Raleigh's belief in " mistakes " in the Scriptures, and formally proclaimed its adhesion to his rejection of the generally received theory of inspiration. But I can only here glance at these deplorable circumstances. A more detailed reference to them will be found in my last chapter.

Another class of circumstances which shows the lamentable state into which evangelical religion has been brought by its professed friends, has also occurred during the present year. I allude to the unnatural fraternization which took place a few months ago between some of the most distinguished of the Congregational preachers and authors in the metropolis, and Dean Stanley, with some other clergymen of the Church of England, who share his Rationalistic views. The Dean, doubtless having ends of his own to serve as the leader of Rationalism in the Anglican Church, invited the Congregationalist ministers to whom I allude, to partake of his

hospitalities in his own house. They eagerly accepted the invitation, as if it had been the highest honour which could be conferred upon them to be patronized by a Dean. And for some months the intimacy on either side was as great as could be conceived. It was truly lamentable to see some of the most distinguished ministers in the Congregational body, all professing to hold and teach evangelical doctrines, thus showing a deference, almost amounting to obsequiousness, to a man whom they knew not to hold a single evangelical principle, but on the contrary to entertain and advocate views on religious subjects which are so ultra-Rationalistic, that I regard them as no better than a modified infidelity. Suppose it were possible that some of the noble Non-conformists of the seventeenth century—the Owens, the Goodwins, the Baxters, the Howes, for example—were to rise from their graves, and revisit the world for the purpose of inspecting the present state of Non-conformity,—I leave it to the Rev. Gentlemen alluded to, to imagine what would be

the feeling of those great and godly men on witnessing such a proof of the degeneracy of their descendants, as was furnished by their fraternizing with Dean Stanley, and others entertaining his views. I can state, from verbal communications made to me by some of the leading men in the Congregationalist body, that the denomination as a whole not only condemn the unnatural fraternization, but that, in their collective capacity, they feel deeply humiliated by it. I wish this were the worst of the matter. Unhappily evangelical religion suffers seriously from the unholy alliance. The cause of Christianity is especially compromised by the sacrifice of its distinctive principles which these leading Nonconformist ministers have made by their anxiety to receive the smiles of Dean Stanley. Had it been their own character only that they had thus compromised, that, though a matter of regret on their own account, would have signified little. But they have compromised the whole Nonconformist body, and caused a blush to crimson their

cheek when they see their principles dragged through the mire to please Dean Stanley.

However, it is some satisfaction to be informed that at least the majority of the Congregational ministers referred to now regret that they ever compromised their own position by consenting to be at the beck and call of Dean Stanley and two or three other dignitaries of the Church of England, for they were soon furnished by the Dean with unpleasant proofs that he only sought to make them instruments for the accomplishment of his own purposes. They doubtless flattered themselves that they would convert him to their views in favour of Voluntaryism. But the delightful delusion was promptly dispelled. The Dean, at the great meeting at St. James's Hall, in June, not only made a speech in favour of maintaining the Irish Church establishment, but moved a resolution to that effect. And not content with his proving to the world how little he cared for the Congregationalist metropolitan mi-

nisters, who had so readily responded to his invitation and rendered him obsequious homage,—he lost no time in declaring himself to be in favour of establishing and endowing Popery,—the very thing of all others to which the Nonconformists, as a body, are most hostile, and against which the very men who had shown so much alacrity in being his obedient servants, had energetically preached and written during the whole of their ministerial career. Verily they have had their reward. Their mortification must be inexpressibly great at this ungracious and inglorious return for their sycophancy to Dean Stanley. Still greater would be their mortification if they were cognizant of what is said of them by the majority of the Nonconformist body, for the ignoble part they have played in thus proving to the world their unfaithfulness to Nonconformist principles.

But there have been other recent signs of the times in the Nonconformist denomination which no one who is faithful to the cause of the truth as it is in Jesus, can look

upon without heaviness of heart. One well-known Congregationalist minister in the metropolis has published one or more pamphlets, advocating the opening of the Crystal Palace, British Museum, and other public places of amusement, on Sundays ; while another, belonging to the Baptist body, has preached from the pulpit, or spoken from the platform, in favour of attending the Sunday lectures on literary, philosophical, and scientific subjects which were got up a few years ago by a clique of avowed infidels.

If we turn to the subject of the preaching of the present day, it must be evident to all who know anything of what the Gospel of Christ really is, that, in most cases, that Gospel is not faithfully preached. In some sermons there may be a certain amount of Gospel, but its effect is neutralized by a preponderating portion of that which is no Gospel ; while in the majority of our modern pulpit discourses the cross of Christ, the great sum and substance of the Gospel is not preached at all. And

this, it is right to state, is true, not in relation to one or two of our religious denominations, but is, in a greater or less measure, true of them all. As an inevitable result, there is a deplorable spiritual deadness in the majority of our existing congregations. They are in the same lamentable condition as the Laodicean Church of old. Though "they have a name to live, they are dead."

But there is still something worse even than this, which remains to be mentioned. There have lately been meetings every Sunday of persons, some of them of exalted social position, who, although with few exceptions nominally members of the Church of England, are Pantheists or Atheists; for practically there is no difference between the two classes of infidels. They meet under the name of Positivists, which all know to be a term synonymous with Atheism. Among those in frequent attendance at these gatherings is the son of a peer of the realm, who for many years held high places in the ministerial councils

of the Sovereign. The nobleman to whom I refer is one of several noblemen, some of them in the House of Lords, and others in the House of Commons, who have entered into a conventional compact to do all in their power to overthrow the religion of Christ, and establish Atheism, in its most hideous form on its ruins. They seek to do what was done in France in the Revolution of 1792, when the Robespierre government of that day publicly proclaimed that there is no God, and that death is an eternal sleep.

In connection with these deplorable facts, we have been startled, within the last two months, by the publication of a pamphlet, written by the late Bishop of Norwich. Dr. Hinds, who recently resigned his bishopric, but still avows himself an attached member of the Church of England, is the author of this pamphlet, entitled "Free Discussion on Religious Topics," published for the purpose of maintaining that unbounded liberty ought to be conceded to the clergy to assail, in every form and by

every means which can be employed, the doctrines of the Church. And not only so, but it is urged that if they themselves have become Deists, or even Atheists, and therefore feel bound to leave the Church, it is their imperative duty, before taking that step, to use every means in their power, by preaching and otherwise, to bring their congregations over to their own Deistical or Atheistical views.

But I must not in this place advert to the other deadly errors which prevail at the present day. To those which I have only touched on in this Preface I have adverted, at greater or less length, according to their relative importance, in the body of the work. The result of the careful inquiries I have made into "THE RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES OF THE TIMES," is a profound conviction that we are now fairly in the midst of those "perilous times," so plainly predicted in various parts of Scripture, as preliminary to the great struggle which is destined to take place between the Gospel of Christ in all its inherent purity

and truth, and God-dishonouring and soul-destroying error. The truth as it is in Jesus, seems, for a season, to have been exiled from most of our churches. Deadly error is fearfully rampant. The true Gospel is shut out from view amid the forms and ceremonies of Ritualism, or buried amidst the rubbish of Rationalism. Both of these comparatively modern enemies of the truth are doing incalculable mischief. Probably no man living has written more against Ritualism than I have done, from the time of its first appearance in 1833, under the name of Tractarianism, down to its present full development under the designation of Ritualism. Yet, if the alternative were imposed upon me to make a choice between the two systems, I say in public, what I have before said in private, that I would unhesitatingly prefer the latter. Rationalism I hold to be but another name for a disguised Deism. The Ritualists do at least believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures, the divinity of Christ, the Atonement, and in the personality and

work of the Holy Spirit. The Rationalists reject all these great fundamental truths. Give me, if I must make a choice, the Bishop of Oxford in preference to Dr. Colenso,—Dr. Pusey in preference to Dean Stanley. But it is my happiness to know that I am not shut up to the necessity of adopting the views of either. The Ritualists come under the awful condemnation pronounced, in the last chapter of the book of Revelation, on those who add to the Word of God; the Rationalists subject themselves to the terrible doom which is there pronounced on those who take away from that blessed Book.

I repeat the expression of my full conviction that “the perilous times,” predicted in the Scriptures as destined to come in the latter days, have arrived. As characteristics of these times, there were to be a great and prevalent apostacy,—a fearfully extensive falling away from the faith of the Gospel. Men were to deny the Lord that bought them; the love of many was to wax cold; scoffers were to arise, and the

question was to be asked, in an unbelieving and scornful spirit, Where is the promise of His (the Lord's) coming? Who that mixes in the world, or even among nominally religious men, does not clearly discern, in the existing state of things, the marked characteristics of those "perilous times," thus foretold in various parts of Scripture, as the precursors of a deadly conflict between vital truth and soul-destroying error? But, I rejoice to say, the issue is not doubtful. The battle, we know, will be fierce—it may be somewhat prolonged; but Christ and his soldiers, fighting under the banner of the Cross, will most surely, in the end, achieve a glorious triumph over the powers of darkness, and the enemies of the Gospel. No matter how close and compact may be the combination between the foes of our faith; no matter how deeply imbued with a spirit of enmity to Christ and his cause; no matter how resolutely they may fight under the guidance of their Satanic leader,—they will be signally vanquished. God

has said it, and He will do it. Let not, therefore, the believer in Christ be discouraged by reason of the present lowering aspect of the spiritual horizon. Dean Alford, with whom, as will be seen in other parts of this volume, I differ in various important matters of faith, is in complete accord with me on this point. In his last new work, "How to Study the New Testament," when speaking of the great apostacy to which "the present state of things is tending," the Dean says, "It will not carry away, and will not silence the Church. Rather will the cloud blacken as the sun brightens, and the testimony to Christ among the faithful will be clearer and purer in words and deeds, as the denial of Christ waxes wider and bolder." It will be an inestimable privilege for all those who shall be permitted to take part in this great battle on the side of Christ, as they will all be partakers in the glories of the victory, which is as sure to be achieved, as if it were already won; for as I have just remarked, God has declared

it will and He is stronger than Satan, the great enemy who is to marshal and lead the hostile forces.

After I had been far advanced with this volume, a work came into my hands, which furnishes a complete confirmation of all I have written in relation to the fatal errors which prevail in our Christian churches, and to the deadly condition into which they have fallen. If any one should take exception to what I have said on these points, on the assumption that my statements are exaggerated, will but consult this new work, just published by Hamilton and Co., under the title of "The Present Crisis and Future Prospects of the Church of God," written by the Rev. E. Cornwall,—he will not only find a confirmation of my representations, but a still more gloomy view taken of the lamentable condition of the Christian ministry. Mr. Cornwall, one of the most respected and spiritually-minded ministers of the Gospel at the present time, has devoted a chapter of his book to this subject, under the title of

“ The Ministry of Slumbering Churches ;” and prefixes to it the significant motto, “ Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel.” What gives greater weight to Mr. Cornwall’s representations respecting the doctrinal errors which are taught in so many of our pulpits, and the deplorable deadness which characterizes the Christian Ministry, is the fact, that Mr. Samuel Morley and Mr. Joshua Wilson, two of the most eminent, and influential men in the Non-conformist religious world, have publicly, in print, adopted and indorsed Mr. Cornwall’s sombre picture of the pulpit ministrations of the present period, both as regarded their doctrinal errors and the careless manner of their preaching. This is a great fact, and no living writer could have displayed greater earnestness than Mr. Cornwall has done, in deploring and denouncing it.

If we thus see that the most strenuous efforts are making, and with a success which it is fearful to contemplate, to eliminate from the Gospel of Christ all that con-

stitutes its life and glory, it surely behoves us who believe in and love the truth as it is in Jesus, to prize more highly than ever, and hold with a still firmer and constantly-growing tenacity of grasp, the great verities of that Gospel. Nor ought this to be all. If the enemies of the Cross band themselves together to banish the Bible as the Word of God from the world, surely we who unreservedly receive the Scriptures as a revelation of the mind and will of God to man, ought to combine for the purpose of vindicating the Divine authority of that blessed Book. The evangelical party, both in the Church and among Dissenters—the faithful still happily to be found among the faithless—have been culpably remiss in the matter. Let not this sin lie any longer at our door. Let all of us unite together, and boldly confront the common foe in the name of Jesus and trusting in the strength of the Almighty; and if so, the day may be much nearer than any of us suppose, when we shall have to raise the shout of victory.

It may be well to mention, that, as I stated in my Preface to "The End of All Things," in relation to that book, the present volume is as original as if no other works had been written on the same side of the subject. In writing it, I read nothing in favour of my own views. When I had finished, I read some other books on the same side, lest I should have omitted any arguments from other writers which would strengthen my own. In the very few instances in which I have quoted or alluded to facts or arguments in other works, I have in each case mentioned the authors and their books.

I will only add that, in writing this volume, I have done so with a full knowledge of the unfavourable reception it is sure to meet with in many quarters. Its publication will be followed by the loss of personal friends, with whom I have been on terms of intimacy for many years. But I have felt that were I to be silent, or to shrink from the explicit and emphatic expression of my convictions in such a crisis

as the present in the religion of Christ, I should justly be subject to the same condemnation for unfaithfulness to the cause of my Lord and Master, which the Bible pronounces upon all those who are chargeable with that great and grievous sin. I have been constrained by the irresistible claims and imperative commands of conscience, to adopt the course I have done. Time with me is fast passing away,—a fact which special circumstances have profoundly impressed on my mind; just when bringing my work to a close. I feel, therefore, that I should have lamentably failed in my duty to God and to my fellow-men, if I had longer delayed to raise my voice against the “DEADLY ERRORS AND DANGEROUS DELUSIONS OF THE DAY.” In doing that to the best of my ability, I have calmly and carefully counted the cost, and am fully prepared for the consequences, whatever they may be.

My task is done. I leave the work in the hands of God, not for a moment

doubting that, if it has been written in accordance with his Word, it will be accompanied by manifest tokens of his approval and blessing.

LONDON, *October*, 1868.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN the brief space of a few months an edition of a thousand copies of this work has been sold, and the demand experiences no abatement. In order that my arguments might be met, or my charges disproved, where it may have been thought it could be successfully done, I sent copies of the work to each of the leading journals which I knew to be most opposed to my views on the several subjects treated of in the Volume. The result has been that the work, though vigorously attacked in various quarters, has not suffered in the slightest degree in any of its leading points. I, therefore, re-publish the Volume without

a single alteration, beyond a few verbal revisions, and the omission of a paragraph in the Preface relating to the Millenarian question.

In two or three weeks a second and concluding Volume will be published, uniform in size and price, in which additional errors of the most dangerous kind, and existing in quarters the least suspected, will be exposed and disproved. It will, further, be seen, from the evidence of new facts, that so far from the statements I have made in the Volume now in the reader's hands being exaggerated, or the charges I have preferred being groundless, both are considerably beneath what the circumstances would have warranted.

LONDON, *March*, 1869.

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THE DOCTRINE OF ANNIHILATION.

PART FIRST.

AMONG the theological errors of the day which are doing incalculable mischief, there is one which prevails to a lamentable extent, although it is comparatively seldom brought before the public. The pernicious error to which I allude is, that those who live and die in their sins will, sooner or later—at death, or after a period more or less prolonged—cease to have either a physical or spiritual existence. This doctrine is sometimes called Destruction; but more frequently Annihilation. I will hereafter advert to the various phases in which it is presented by those who have embraced it. Compared with the other deadly errors of the present

day, we hear but little of the doctrine of Annihilation; but it would be a great mistake to infer, on that account, that it is only adopted to a limited extent. It has made of late years, and is at this hour making, alarming progress. The reason why we hear so little of it, compared with the progress it has made, and is making, in England, is, that multitudes who have fallen into the error have not the moral courage openly to proclaim their new convictions, because they would thereby forfeit the friendship of, and be shut out from all intercourse with, parties belonging to the evangelical denominations with which they happen to be connected. The Rev. W. C. Boardman, one of the few persons in London who avow and preach the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked, stated a few months ago, in a periodical entitled *Religious Opinion*, that this was part of the penalty which he had to pay for having embraced and openly avowed the belief that, the moment unconverted sinners die there is an entire and eternal end of both soul and body. Mr. Boardman says that, to such an extent has he suffered because of his adoption of Annihilational views, that he is not only disowned in the private relations of life by his former most intimate Christian friends, but that they will not even sit down with him at the Lord's table. Mr. Boardman

has not only, in various forms, published, and strenuously advocated through the press, his annihilation views, but he preaches weekly to a small congregation in the north-east of the metropolis. My own observation, and the information I receive from various quarters, conduct me to the conclusion, that the Destructionist or Annihilation notion, in some one or other of its varied forms, prevails to a very great extent, both in the Establishment, and amongst the Congregationalists and Baptists. I shall, in subsequent pages of this work, furnish facts which will bear me out in the statement I have thus made.

With regard to the history of the Annihilation scheme, there is little which can be said; because, until lately, the theory of the entire and eternal extinction of the being of the ungodly at death, or at some period more or less remote in the world to come, never had a sufficient number of adherents to render it important enough to entitle it to the dignity of a history. Universalism has a history, which I shall, when I come to speak of it, briefly trace from its origin to the present hour. But with regard to Annihilation, I cannot find that it had a single advocate of any note during the Patristic period of ecclesiastical history,—a period, especially in that part of it which constituted the second century,

which was characterized above any other in the annals of Christianity for the wildness of the views which were embraced and inculcated by some one or other of the Fathers.

It is right I should here state, that I have met with one instance in which Irenæus, who flourished in the second century, is represented to have been an advocate of the doctrine of Annihilation. The authority on which this statement is made is one which is but little known; a fact which is presumptively against its credibility. It is that of a French author, M. du Pin. It is quoted by a writer on the subject in "Rees' Encyclopædia;" but he does not seem to have much, if any, faith in the accuracy of the statement. If it were true that Irenæus was a Destructionist, it is very strange that the fact should not have been generally known. If I remember rightly, Eusebius, who flourished in the fourth century, and was the first accredited ecclesiastical historian, makes no mention of the fact, which would be surprising were it in accordance with the statement of M. du Pin. Certainly, Dr. Lardner, who collected a great many facts connected with this eminent Father of the second century, makes no allusion, in his "Credibility of the Gospel History," to any such notion as that of the annihilation of the wicked

having been entertained by Irenæus. But what makes the thing more improbable still, is the fact that he wrote a work, in five books, against “Heresies,”—a work on which his reputation chiefly rests. As the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked would, at the time of his writing this book, have been regarded as one of the rankest heresies in the annals of Christianity, the very fact of his entertaining such a notion,—would have been deemed by his contemporaries a disqualification for his writing a work against “Heresies” in the then Christian Church. I will only add another reason why we ought to discredit the statement that Irenæus embraced the theory of Annihilation. That reason is that it would have been at variance—fatally so, on the hypothesis of annihilation at death—with what we know were his views in relation to the union of body and soul after death. His conviction was—and he has written elaborately to prove it—that after death the soul will have a body conjoined with it, of precisely the same form and figure as that in which the soul dwelt before the body’s dissolution. Now, it surely would be passing strange if Irenæus, in his ingenious discussion on this subject, could have believed in the theory of Annihilation, whether at death, or at any subsequent period, however remote, and

yet made no allusion to it,—not even the most indirect. Those who may wish to see the views of Irenæus unfolded more fully on these points, I would refer to Cudworth's "Intellectual System of the Universe." And as I thus maintain that we have no evidence that any of the Fathers of the first four centuries embraced the doctrine of Annihilation, so neither have I been able to discover an instance of any one known to fame having avowed himself a believer in the doctrine of the eternal destruction of human life, at or after death, at a date farther back than the time of the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell.

In the latter half of the seventeenth century the advocates of the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked, formed themselves into a community, which they termed a church, under the presidency of the "famous John Biddle,"—as he has been called in some works on the religious denominations of the world. To a work of his, denying the eternity of future punishment, Dr. Owen replied at great length. Mr. Biddle, I should state, began his theological career, both as author and preacher, as a Unitarian, and, as many others holding the class of views indicated by that term have done since his day, he gradually descended in his religious belief, until he got to the low deep—than which there

is no lower—of embracing the doctrine of Annihilation. I am not aware that, with the exception of this one case, there has been in this country any body of persons, calling themselves a church, duly organized on the basis of the Annihilation scheme.

That celebrated scholar, Mr. Dodwell, who lived in the latter part of the seventeenth, and the early part of the eighteenth century, was a believer in the annihilation of the wicked. The fact is brought clearly out in his “Life,” by Brokelsby, although some of his admirers after his death endeavoured to show that he could not, in strict propriety of speech, be said to hold the doctrine of Annihilation. The very title, indeed, of one of his works, ought to have satisfied any person that he did hold that doctrine. The title of the book referred to was, “The Natural Mortality of the Soul.” It is true, he made some admissions to the effect that God, could, by some mysterious influence, “immortalize the soul to punishment as well as to reward.” But that the book was regarded in the light in which I have put it, may be inferred from the fact that it created great astonishment, coming from such a quarter in the Christian world, and that the eminent and learned Dr. Samuel Clarke thought it so much adapted to do mischief, that he re-

plied to it at great length, and with an amount of ability which might have been expected from a man of his distinguished talents. The advocates of the Annihilation scheme are proud to be able to claim Mr. Dodwell, because of his great learning and his exemplary character, as one of their number. I willingly make both concessions to them. But, on the other hand, if the supporters of the Destructionist theory attach so much importance to the fact that Mr. Dodwell was a sharer of their views on that one subject, they ought to regard with equal respect his views on other subjects. Are they prepared for this? It was with him just as firm a conviction that the principle of immortality could be given to any one by the bishops,—and by none but them since the death of the apostles; and that the “immortalizing spirit” was imparted by the bishops at the time of the administration of the ordinance of baptism. This was carrying out the notion of baptismal regeneration, when administered by a bishop, to an extent which has, so far as I know, no example in the present day. The believers in our day in that figment, all concur in the opinion that those who are baptismally regenerated may ultimately perish; but Mr. Dodwell potently entertained the conviction that, once having been “divinely immortalized” by a bishop, all who

were so were as sure of being translated to heaven at death, as if they were already there. I repeat, then, the question,—are those who attach so much importance to the fact of his believing that men are naturally born to be annihilated for ever, prepared to share his no less confident belief, that bishops possess the power divinely delegated to them, of immortalizing any one they please by the simple process of baptism? As a logical consequence of this article of his creed, Mr. Dodwell regarded all bishops with a reverence or superstition which was nothing short of idolatry. But this was not the only astonishing article of Mr. Dodwell's creed. He was an equally firm believer in the doctrine that sacerdotal absolution was absolutely necessary to the remission of sins, and consequently to salvation, even in the case of those who were most profoundly penitent. Again, therefore, I ask,—Do those Annihilationists of the present day, who regard him with the highest esteem because of his Annihilationist views, hold him to be an equal authority in relation to these other sentiments? I do not expect to receive an affirmative answer to my question from any one of their number.

About seventy or eighty years ago there were several avowed Destructionists, whose names I shall hereafter mention. In America the Anni-

hilationists have, for upwards of half a century, not only been numerous, but have had, as they now have various places for public worship according to their views. They have had, too, in the United States, for nearly half a century, a literature of their own. They have published numbers of books advocating their system, and defending it when assailed by those who are opposed to it. The American Annihilationists have, besides, monthly and weekly organs, some of which have attained to a very considerable circulation ; a fact which at least presumptively, proves that the Destructionist theory has many adherents in the New World.

7 Among the contemporaries of Dr. Samuel Clarke who embraced the Annihilation scheme, though with certain important modifications, is a name which no one holding Evangelical principles can mention in such association without the deepest regret. Every one knows that towards the close of his life Dr. Watts slid into the Sabellian scheme, which, though he did not clearly see it in that light, divests the Lord Jesus of his proper Deity. But while all are aware that in his latter days Dr. Watts adopted Sabellian notions, it is not generally known, even among religious men, that he ever had the slightest leaning towards the Annihilation scheme.

Yet such was unhappily the fact. Amongst other authorities for this statement, I may mention the names of the Rev. Robert Adams and of the Rev. Charles Buck. The fact is mentioned by the former in his "Religious World Displayed," and by the latter in his "Theological Dictionary." Both are authors of undoubted credibility. There was, however, this difference between him and other advocates of the notion that the wicked are all destined to be sooner or later annihilated, —that he confined his acceptance of that notion to the belief that the children only of ungodly parents dying in their infancy, will be annihilated. The very fact that one who could have written in his earlier days his "Treatise on Logic," and other works replete with sound reasoning, should, in his later years, have adopted so extraordinary a notion as this, only shows that towards the close of his life his intellectual faculties had become much impaired; and in that fact let me say, parenthetically, that those who have deeply deplored the circumstance, that the views of his later life respecting the person of Christ should have been so different from the doctrinal parts of his hymns and of his earlier prose writings, —may find no small measure of satisfaction.

With regard to Dr. Watts's theory that the children, dying in their infancy, of ungodly

parents, and they only, shall be annihilated at their death,—it is so manifestly at variance alike with revelation and reason, that one feels some difficulty in bringing oneself to engage in a formal refutation of it. I know of no passage of Scripture which gives even the semblance of a sanction to it. All Scripture which bears on the subject, so far as I am acquainted with the Word of God, points in just the opposite direction. It goes to show that children dying in infancy will, in every instance, be saved. I do not see on what ground any one can doubt this who studies attentively what our Lord said and did on the two memorable occasions on which little children were specially brought before Him.

The first of these incidents is recorded in the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew. In answer, we are told, to the question put to our Saviour by his disciples, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a little child. The very fact of calling the little child and placing it in the midst of the disciples, would have justified the conclusion that had that child died in infancy, it would have been saved; and the justness of such inference from what our Lord did was confirmed by what He immediately said: “Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye

shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” I cannot see how any one can doubt the fact of this child being in a state of grace, and consequently certain to be saved had it died in its childhood. If only those who became as little children were to enter the kingdom of heaven, the inevitable deduction from the fact is, that little children dying in their infancy will most surely be saved.

The same fact is brought fully out in the fifth verse, “Whoso shall receive”—that is, treat with kindness—“one such little child in My name, receiveth Me.” Therefore if the fact of receiving children, and treating them with affectionate kindness, is regarded by Jesus as equivalent to the reception of Himself, it necessarily follows that He loves little children, and if they are loved by Him, the conclusion is irresistible, that, dying as children, they will be saved.

I am aware that some divines have seen a difficulty in believing in the salvation of children dying in infancy, because of the expression in the sixth verse, “These little ones which believe in Me.” They think that the phrase in question limits the love of Jesus to such children as believe in Him. I see no difficulty whatever in the case. The child to whom the reference is made by our Lord, and who is set before us by Him as a

representative child, in order that we might seek to resemble children in the simplicity and humility, and other lovable qualities which constitute their characters generally,—this child was manifestly too young to believe in Christ in the sense in which faith in Him is usually regarded. The child in question is three times called a “*little child*” by our Lord, and therefore must have been incapable of that comprehension of the character and work of Christ, without which there can be no real enlightened or saving faith in Him.

But, in addition to the fact that the child in question is three times called a “*little child*,” our Lord says that those who would enter into the kingdom of heaven must “become as little children.” We have further presumptive confirmation of the belief that the phrase “little children,” as here employed, is synonymous with the word “infants,” in what is said in the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel by Luke, where the Evangelist, in alluding to children having been brought to Christ, speaks of them as “infants.” The words of the Evangelist are: “And they brought unto Him,”—that is, Christ,—“infants, that He would touch them.” This, I repeat, is a further confirmation of that for which I am contending, namely, that no children dying in infancy will be

annihilated, as Dr. Watts believed they would be where they were the children of unconverted parents, but that, on the contrary, they will be saved.

In the tenth chapter of the Gospel by Mark, we have another reference made to our Lord in connection with the circumstance of children coming into contact with Him. Poole and some other commentators evidently think that the passage in Mark refers to the same incident as that to which I have just been adverting as related by Matthew. I cannot see that the passages are parallel. In Matthew we only read of one child, and the reason why this child is brought before us was that Christ might, by specially referring to it, answer a question put by his disciples as to who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and at the same time administer a rebuke to them for their undue—perhaps, I should say, sinful—curiosity. In the passage in Mark, and also in the parallel narrative in Luke, we hear nothing of any questions having been put to Christ by his disciples, nor of Jesus “calling a little child unto Him, and setting him in the midst of them.” On the contrary, we are told in the passage in Mark—and the fact is repeated in almost the same phraseology in Luke’s Gospel—that the children were brought

unto Jesus. The words of the Evangelist Mark, beginning at the thirteenth verse and ending at the sixteenth verse of the tenth chapter, are these:—“And they”—that is, those who came to hear the addresses of our Lord—“brought young children to Him that He should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

I should here observe that there is a precisely parallel passage to this in the nineteenth chapter of Matthew, as well as in the eighteenth chapter of Luke; but as the one in Matthew is less copious, I pass it over. In the narrative given in the quotation from Mark of what thus took place, it is simply said that our Lord expressed his disapproval of the conduct of his disciples, by calling the little children to Him, and then admonished his disciples not hereafter to seek to prevent children being brought to Him. His words of admonition and rebuke were, “Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them

not, for of such is the kingdom of God.” There is no ground whatever for assuming that the children so brought to Jesus were all the children of converted parents. It may, indeed, be doubted whether any of them were so; for it was in the early period of Christ’s ministry that the incident took place: and therefore the presumption is that none of those parents—at any rate, most assuredly, not all—had any clear views of the Divinity of Christ, and of his being the Lamb of God that was, by the shedding of his blood on the cross, to take away the sins of the world. They simply believed that He possessed the power of relieving children who might be sick or suffering, or of, in some other way, doing them good. The majority, if not all, of those children who were brought to Christ, could not have been the children of godly parents, for this other reason, that if they had it is very unlikely that the disciples should have rebuked those that brought them, namely, their parents. At all events, the language of our Lord, according to the testimony of Mark, who wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, excluded no children, but desired that all children should be permitted to be brought unto Him. “Suffer,” He says, “little children to come unto Me.” He makes no reserves. He lays down no restrictions.

Children, as children, were to be brought unto Him. The words last quoted ought of themselves to make the point clear, that no children dying in their infancy will perish or be annihilated. For Jesus could never say to any child, "Come unto Me," take it in his arms, and bless it, and afterwards doom that child to annihilation. The words show that Jesus loves all children as such, and where He loves there must be eternal blessing, and not eternal extinction of being.

But if any doubt should still remain in the mind of any one on the point, let me beg his attention to the words from the lips of our Lord, which follow those of "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." Jesus adds, "For of such is the kingdom of God." Different constructions, I am aware, have been put on these words of our Lord. Taken literally, they undoubtedly sanction the belief that the majority of the inhabitants of heaven consist of those who died in infancy. This belief accords with the conviction, which I have never for one moment ceased to entertain, that all children who die in infancy are saved. As nearly half of the human race pass away from our world in their infantile years, the truthfulness of the language of Christ, when He says that "of such," or of infants, "is

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the kingdom of God," or " of heaven," would be borne out by the literal fact. If this view of the passage be a correct one, it follows that those commentators who interpret it as intended to teach us that it merely means that the kingdom of God, or of heaven, consists of those who, having been regenerated by Divine grace, have acquired the docility, the simplicity, the humility, and those other characteristic qualities for which children are so lovable,—misconceive its meaning. The parallel passage in the Gospel of Luke is to the same effect as the passages in Mathew and Mark to which I have referred. I need not, therefore, quote the language of the Evangelist Luke. It is stated distinctly in two of the passages in question, and I hold that it is plainly implied in them all, that as the children were brought to Jesus that he might be pleased to bless them, so they were all blessed by Him. No one who reads the passages alluded to can doubt this. If, therefore, Christ took in his arms and blessed the children thus brought unto Him without a single exception, no one, as I have already remarked, can doubt that his Divine blessing involved or insured their eternal salvation. And as, to repeat what I have before said, there is no reason to believe that any of the parents, much less all of them, whose children

were thus blessed by Christ, were believers in Him, or converted persons, I hold the conclusion to be inevitable, that all children dying in their infancy are saved,—not lost, in the sense of either suffering torments in a future state, or of being annihilated.

In the tenth verse of the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to a portion of which I have before adverted, our Lord says, “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones.” These “little ones,” I maintain, though some divines—such as Thomas Scott and Adam Clarke—are of a contrary opinion—are those who were spoken of in the sixth verse: “For I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” If every child, therefore, has its angel in heaven, surely children dying in infancy must themselves, without any exceptions, be also received into heaven. I am aware that Dr. Gill, Bishop Porteous, Matthew Henry, Thomas Scott, Dr. Adam Clarke, and various other eminent divines, expound these words of our Lord in the sense of their being meant to apply, not to “little children” in the literal acceptation of the phrase, but to believers who cherish the dispositions and exemplify the guileless conduct of children. I have carefully considered what the distinguished divines, whose

names I have mentioned, advance in favour of their views of the words of Christ in the passage in question; but I am constrained to say that, though reluctant to set up my own opinion in opposition to that of these eminent theologians, I can see no force in what they urge in support of the construction they put on the language of our Lord. No one has yet ventured to deny that the "little child," whom the Saviour set in the midst of his disciples, was a "little child" in the usual acceptation of the phrase. Poole, indeed, and others say the child was an "infant," a word which conveys the idea of a very young or "little child." The child is first called a "*little* child" in the second verse of the chapter in Matthew to which I am referring. The phrase "little child," "this little child," as applied to the same child again, occurs in the fourth verse. In the fifth verse the words of our Lord are, "One such little child," evidently referring to the little child that He had set before his disciples, as recorded in the second verse. In the sixth verse our Saviour employs phraseology which I maintain cannot be construed to mean grown-up believers. "Whoever," He says, "shall offend one of these little ones," etc. It is evident here that the allusion is to "little children" resembling in nature and disposition the "little child" of which He had

previously spoken. In the tenth verse, too, we again meet with the expression, "these little ones," as employed by Jesus. "It is not," He says, "the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of *these* little ones should perish."

There is another consideration which to my mind is of itself conclusive as to the correctness of my conviction that it was of "little children," in the usual acceptation of the words, that our Lord speaks in the passage to which I have been calling attention. If the view of the able and eminent annotators of Scripture, whose names I have mentioned were the correct one, and that it was of adult believers—men and women—not of young children, that our Saviour spake, I can perceive no appropriateness or point in the passage. If it was to those that Christ referred who were already, or would become hereafter, his disciples, just as much so as those to whom He administered the rebuke and gave the admonition, the question presents itself—Where was the necessity either for the rebuke or the admonition? Those disciples to whom Jesus addressed Himself would naturally—speaking in a spiritual sense—esteem and love their fellow-disciples, instead of "despising" or "offending" them. There was no duty that Christ more frequently or more emphatically enforced on his disciples during the

whole of his public ministry, than that of loving one another; and it was one great characteristic of his disciples that they *did* love one another. There could therefore be no necessity—indeed, it would have been quite out of place—for the rebuke and admonition of our Lord in the passage under consideration, as far as related to the duty of loving their adult brethren, or those who might hereafter become the disciples of Christ; but inasmuch as the disciples thus addressed by Jesus had felt and expressed themselves towards children in this unkindly way, the rebuke and the admonition, as regarded them, were needed, and were therefore continued from the beginning to the end of the passage.

I regard the words “*not the will* of your Father who is in heaven,” applied to children, as constituting a complete confirmation of my firm belief that, so far from the offspring of ungodly parents dying in infancy being annihilated, as Dr. Watts supposes, they will be saved. I know it may be urged that we are elsewhere told in Holy Writ that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and yet that we know that the great majority of mankind perish. But to my mind, the phrase, “will of God,” in relation to the “little ones” referred to, is not to be

understood in the same sense as the expression, “not willing that any should perish.” In the former case I regard the words, “your Father’s will,” as expressive of God’s purpose that none of the “little ones,” or children, should perish. And if such be the Divine purpose, we know it must and will be accomplished. In the case of the quotation from Peter, that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, it is very clear to me that the import of the language is simply that God has not, as we are elsewhere told, any pleasure in the death of those that die, but would rather that all should turn and live. But though it is not his will or pleasure that any single creature of his should perish, that is a very different thing from his purpose that all should be saved; whereas, in relation to the children referred to by our Lord, as representatives of all children, his words are, that it is God’s *will* or purpose that not one of them—no, not one—should perish.

I trust, therefore, that I have from the Holy Scriptures proved, in the most conclusive manner, that so far from any children being annihilated, or consigned to a place of living punishment when they die in infancy, *all* will be saved.

Let me now very briefly invite attention to

what Reason says on the subject. I feel a thorough persuasion I shall be able to show that Reason speaks the same language as Revelation. Both, in other words, are in perfect accord in their utterances on the point.

First of all let it be remembered that we nowhere read of children appearing at the judgment seat, or any condemnation being pronounced upon them. All who will be condemned on the day of the Grand Assize will be so for what they either did which was wrong, or for their having failed to do that which was right. The ground on which they will be convicted and sentenced to punishment will be their sins of commission or omission. It will be for doing the things which, when in the body, they ought not to have done, or for not having done the things which they ought to have done. Now, it is manifest that children who had died in infancy could not be made the subjects of a judgment governed by such principles. They had done no sinful act of which they were conscious, and consequently none for which, in the eye of reason and justice, they could be held responsible. Neither would a righteous Judge condemn and punish them for not doing that which it was both morally and physically impossible for them to do. Yet, according to the notion of Dr. Watts, all chil-

dren of ungodly parents, dying in infancy, will be doomed to eternal annihilation. Not only, I repeat, has no such belief any countenance in the volume of Revelation, but Reason revolts at the notion. All children, when born, whether the offspring of pious or godless parents, are placed in the same category; and therefore there is something in the idea at which the mind recoils, that those children who, without any influence of their own, were born of irreligious parents should, in the event of their dying in infancy, be subjected to everlasting destruction, in the sense of annihilation, while those who, equally without any influence of their own, were born of Christian parents should be made the heirs of eternal life in heaven.

I am aware that all children—those alike of the parents of believers in Christ, and of those who are not Christians—inherit original sin. We are all conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity. But the offspring of believing parents are as much so as the children of godless parents. It would have been much more reasonable therefore—all children being the same by nature—had Dr. Watts doomed all of them, dying in infancy, to annihilation, than to assign that destiny to those only who are born of godless parents. His theory represents God as making children

morally and judicially responsible for the sins of their parents, which a righteous Judge never will or could do. But there is another difficulty which attaches to the Infantile Annihilation scheme of Dr. Watts, which, apart from the utterances of Scripture on the subject, I hold to be fatal to it. What, I should like to ask any one who shares Dr. Watts's views on the subject, is to be the destiny of those children dying in infancy whose parents afterwards become Christians? Would the advocates of the Infant Destruction theory appoint them their place amongst the annihilated? If so, those persons make the eternal bliss and glory, or the everlasting annihilation, of multitudes of children who die in infancy dependent on the mere accidental date of their birth. The child that dies before the parents are converted is doomed to annihilation; the child of the same parents dying in childhood, after their conversion, is saved and glorified for ever; and all without any act in either case of the child's own. The mind, I say again, recoils from such an hypothesis.

But there is yet another and an equally insurmountable difficulty which attaches to the theory of Dr. Watts. Were he alive, I should put the question to him,—What would be the destiny of those children dying in infancy who were the

offspring of parents, one of whom was pious and the other ungodly? This is a very common case. Will any present sharer of the views of Dr. Watts answer my question? The case I have thus put is one which I hold to be of itself utterly subversive of the Infantile Annihilation hypothesis of that excellent, but, in this instance, greatly mistaken man.

I feel I need say no more. To my own mind it is a most delightful conviction—one which I would not part with at any price—that *all* children dying in infancy will be saved. The sentiment expressed by Dr. Young in his “Night Thoughts,” in relation to the death of a particular child, is, I rejoice to think, equally true in regard to all children dying in their infancy:—

She saw the light, and turned her eyes aside
From our dim regions to the eternal sun.

With respect to those who, in times more recent than the era of Dr. Watts, have held Annihilation views, I shall have occasion to speak in my next chapter. Suffice it in the meantime to say, that in the beginning of the second half of the last century, Mr. Forsyth, at that time a man well known, wrote a work entitled “Principles of Moral Science,” with the view of showing that with the exception of a very few persons who had

cultivated their intellectual powers in this life, and whom he regards as destined to enjoy a happy immortality, he consigns the whole human race to inevitable and immediate annihilation the moment they die. There was also in the early part of the second half of the last century another divine of considerable note at the time, Dr. Chauncey, who had two schemes with regard to future punishments. The Destructionists' scheme was one which, to use his own language, he reserved in case his other scheme of Universalism should fail him. Contemporary, or soon after, with the latter there was Mr. Bourne, of Birmingham, who, for a short period, had a considerable number of followers. They called themselves Bourneans, or were so called by others. As respects those who at the present time entertain Destructionist views, one of their number—and perhaps the most fearless in the avowal of Annihilation sentiments—mentions in a note to me the names of several parties, some of them well-known, who are firm believers in that creed. With regard to some of them, I am not quite sure whether, in denying the eternity of future punishments, they ought not rather to be classed amongst the Universalists. For the present, therefore, I think it better not to give their names. On a future occasion I shall be able to

speak with greater confidence on the point. Suffice it in the meantime to say, that there are to be found among those who hold Destructionist or Annihilation views, clergymen of the Church of England and ministers who belong to the Congregational Dissenters. Several of these,—to some of whose works I shall have occasion to recur in subsequent parts of my volume,—have boldly and broadly avowed their Destructionist beliefs.

THE DOCTRINE OF ANNIHILATION.

PART SECOND.

I HOPE I have in my previous chapter satisfactorily shown the groundlessness of the notion advocated by, amongst others, a no less eminent and excellent person than Dr. Watts, that the children, dying in their infancy, of ungodly parents are annihilated at death. I trust I have made it no less clear that *all* children dying in infancy are saved. This is a most blessed belief—an inexpressibly comfortable thought—to every person of rightly-constituted mind, but more especially to those parents who have been bereft by death of children that they loved with a fervour of affection such as none but a parent's bosom can feel.

I now come to the consideration of the Annihilation or Destructionist theory in its relation to those of mature years who die in their sins. But before I enter on the subject, in an argumentative

sense, let me address a word or two of solemn admonition to those who either may have adopted the Destructionist hypothesis, or may be conscious of the existence of leanings in that direction. It is a question of infinite importance, and therefore it behoves all such to put the question to themselves, and to answer it, as in the sight of God, "Have I calmly, dispassionately, and fully examined the subject, and with an honest desire, first to ascertain and then embrace the truth, on whichever side it lies?" Lord Brougham, when many years ago at the summit of his high reputation, laid it down as a proposition which did not admit of controversy, that a man can no more control his religious belief than he can change the colour of his skin. So far from this being an incontrovertible proposition, it is wholly without foundation. All men's observation and experience are wholly at variance with it. We know, from the Word of God, and from our own experience as well, how deceitful the human heart is, and what a powerful tendency there is in human minds to adopt those views on any subject which are most congenial to our corrupt nature.

When we wish certain views to be true, we require but little reasoning to convince us that they are so, compared with that which is needed

to work conviction in our minds when propositions demand our consideration which are opposed to our interests on our pleasures. Now, as every ungodly person must earnestly wish, that instead of being doomed to suffer, either through all eternity, or for an indefinite period, which may be prolonged for many myriads of ages, he may be annihilated at death both in body and soul, and consequently be for ever after inaccessible to pain of body or anguish of mind,—there must, constituted as human nature is, be a powerful predisposition to accept the latter theory. I need not add that, in such a case, there will be a corresponding readiness to receive the views, without due examination, which are thus most congenial to the mind, or most in accordance with the wishes entertained. Let me then beseech all such, and all, indeed, who may have turned their attention to the subject, to accompany me with an earnest desire to know and receive the truth, while I endeavour to ascertain the mind of the Spirit in his utterances in relation to it. A mistake in the matter would be immeasurably more awful than the mind can conceive, and, consequently, ought to be, with a corresponding solicitude, guarded against.

The words “destroy,” “destroyed,” and “destruction,” employed in certain portions of

Scripture, are those on which the advocates of the Annihilationist or Destructionist theory chiefly rest their scheme. They conveniently assume, and reason on the assumption, that the words in every instance, literally or actually, denote destruction or annihilation. The assumption is altogether groundless, as I shall, I trust, be able to prove to the satisfaction of all whose minds are accessible to reason on the point. Afterwards, I shall advert to the passages of Scripture in which the words "destroy," "destroyed," or "destruction" occur, which the advocates of Annihilation regard as constituting the strongest arguments in favour of their views.

With regard to my proposition that the words "destroy," "destroyed," and "destruction" do not invariably mean annihilation, or, as applied to living intelligences, extinction of being, let me bespeak the attention of my readers while I endeavour to prove that the proposition is in accordance with truth.

The words "destroy," "destroyed," and "destruction" are often employed to express Providential dispensations of an afflictive kind. Probably there are few passages in the Old Testament in which the word "destroy" occurs, which are more awful than that in the twenty-sixth verse of the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, and

yet the term does not there mean annihilation. God himself is the speaker. He says :—"I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it: ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed."

Now, we know that the solemn declaration which God here made, that He would destroy the children of Israel when they had reached the land of Canaan, was not carried out in the annihilation sense of the term destroy. They lived as a people; and, in the persons of their descendants, have lived till this day. Neither could the word be construed in the sense of their utterly perishing in the promised land, for though they were driven out of that land they were, as Scott the commentator remarks, and as we otherwise know to be the fact, restored to it after a seventy years' captivity. If the passage were construed in the sense of the Destructionist theology, we should read in the history of the Israelites, that they were all utterly exterminated in the land of Canaan, and ceased for ever to exist as a people.

Nor could they themselves, I ought here to remark, have so viewed the words of Jehovah, "Ye shall be utterly destroyed," for in the very next verse God says, still addressing his rebellious

people : “And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen whither the Lord shall lead you.” I do not understand the latter passage even to mean that the numbers of the Israelites were to be fewer, so far as regarded themselves, than before. The construction which I put upon it is, that their numbers would be few compared with the numbers of the heathen among whom they were destined to dwell for a period appointed by God in his dealings with them. But be that as it may, my argument remains unaffected. The children of Israel were not destroyed in the annihilation sense of the word, in terms of this awful threatening of Jehovah. The word “destroyed” was proved by their subsequent history to mean only the afflictive dispensations of Providence with which they were visited because of their iniquities. From this passage, therefore, the Annihilation or Destructionist theory receives no countenance whatever. On the contrary, the passage is manifestly at variance with it.

In the third verse of the second chapter of the book of Job, the word “destroy” occurs under circumstances which, I maintain, are sufficient of themselves to demolish the Annihilation hypothesis. In that part of Scripture we read : “And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou con-

sidered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst Me against him, to destroy him without cause."

Now here, it will be observed, the word "destroy" is applied to Job, whom God himself describes as one of the most excellent men that ever lived; and yet Satan is represented as seeking his annihilation,—if the meaning which the Destructionists attach to the term "destroy" is to be accepted as that which the passage is intended to convey. But as the annihilation of a saint of God, or believer in Christ, is an impossibility according to their theory, which limits annihilation to the wicked, the whole of their scheme, so far as it is grounded on the belief that the word "destroy" whenever employed in Scripture means the annihilation of the soul as well as the body,—falls to the ground.

In the tenth verse of the nineteenth chapter of the same book, Job is described as complaining that God *had* "destroyed" him:—"He *hath*," said the patriarch, "destroyed me on every side, and I am gone." The word "destroyed" could not here be received in the annihilation sense, otherwise Job would not have

been in circumstances to employ it. He was alive when he wrote the words in question, which he could not have been had he been annihilated. All that is here meant, as is the case in many other places where the word "destroyed" is used, was, that God had visited his servant Job with sore troubles.

I might quote many other passages from the book of Job which are wholly irreconcilable with the Annihilation creed ; but I will only advert to one more, which will be found in the twenty-second verse of the ninth chapter of his book. There we have a short sentence which ought of itself to "destroy" the theory of the Annihilationists in reference to the wicked. "This," says the sorely-tried patriarch, "is one thing, therefore I said it. He (God) destroyeth the *perfect* and the wicked." Here the good as well as the bad—the righteous as well as the wicked—are doomed to annihilation, if the Destructionist hypothesis, that to be destroyed means annihilation, is well founded. Are the Destructionists prepared to acquiesce in this consequence of their scheme ? Consistency requires that they should,—in which case they are no better than the Atheistical French philosophers of the latter part of the eighteenth century, who passed a resolution to the effect that there is no

future state, and then proclaimed death to be nothing more nor less than an eternal sleep.

Equally fatal to the Annihilation hypothesis is the word "destruction," as employed in the third verse of the nineteenth Psalm:—"Thou turnest man to 'destruction,'" says the Psalmist, "and sayest, Return, ye children of men." Had this been said of the ungodly only, the Destructionists would have insisted that it was of itself quite conclusive as to the truth of their Annihilation creed, which includes the destruction of the body as well as of the soul. But the word is made use of by David in relation to all men,—no less so to the righteous than to the wicked. According, therefore, to the Annihilation scheme, "man," by which is here manifestly meant "all men," the most eminent saint that ever lived is destined to eternal annihilation," just as much as the worst person that ever trod the earth.

To advert to only one more passage in the Psalms, out of many which I might cite, David represents God as saying, "I will early destroy *all* the wicked of the land, that I may cut off *all* evil-doers from the city of the Lord." Now, if the work of "destruction," in the sense in which the advocates of the annihilation of those who die unpardoned, understand the word, be here meant, there must have been a period when there

was not a single ungodly person among the millions who constituted God's ancient people. *All* must have been righteous,—all saints in the scriptural acceptation of the term. But we know that there never was in the history of the Jews, as there never will be in the history of any people, such a period as this, when *all* shall be righteous.

Solomon, too, in the book of Proverbs, employs, in several instances, the word “destruction” in a sense which is utterly subversive of the Annihilation theory. Take, for example, the fourteenth and fifteenth verses of the tenth chapter of his book of Proverbs. “These men,” it is there said, “lay up knowledge, but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction. The rich man's wealth is his strong city; the destruction of the poor is their poverty.” In neither of the two cases in which the word “destruction” is here used, can it be regarded as synonymous with annihilation.

In the first instance, it means that the words of the foolish are injurious to him by making his folly manifest. In the second instance, the expression, “the destruction of the poor is their poverty,” simply means that the poverty of the poor subjects them to great inconvenience and discomfort in relation to the necessities of life.

Certainly, in neither case is the idea of the annihilation of man's existence involved in the passage.

Many other cases might be cited to the same effect from the sayings of Solomon, but I will content myself with one more. In the ninth verse of the eleventh chapter of the same book of Proverbs it is said, "An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour." Surely the most strenuous advocate of the annihilation of the wicked, would not render the word "destroyeth," employed in this place, as synonymous with the extinction of life. The hypocrite's neighbour might be one of God's saints, and if, therefore, he was to be destroyed in the annihilation sense by the hypocrite's mouth, the Destructionists must believe that some of the people of God *may*, as, according to their creed, the wicked all *will*, be annihilated, either at death or after they have endured intolerable torments in a future state for some unknown period. The word "destroyeth," as here used, simply means that an injury is done to the character of others by the misrepresentations and calumnies of unprincipled men.

In the book of Isaiah we are furnished with various arguments, mostly of an indirect, but yet of a conclusive kind against the Annihilation

creed. I will, however, content myself with one, because it seems to me to be utterly subversive of the Destructionist theory. The passage to which I allude is in the second verse of the thirty-fourth chapter. "For," says the prophet, "the indignation of the Lord is upon *all* nations, and his fury upon all their armies; He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter." Had this been true in the sense in which the advocates of the Destructionist scheme explain the word "destroyed," there must have been, in Isaiah's time, a universal annihilation of mankind,—one in which the righteous as well as the wicked would have been included,—not even excepting Isaiah himself; for the destruction was of *all* nations, which necessarily involves every individual. Does not, then, this one verse of Scripture lay, of itself, the axe at the root of that system which is based on the assumption, that the words "destroy," "destroyed," and "destruction," mean annihilation, or the extinction of life?

I pass over the book of Jeremiah, as well as that of Ecclesiastes, in both of which there are passages which are irreconcilable with the belief that the words "destroy," "destroyed," or "destruction," are synonymous with the extinction of life. In the book of Ezekiel several texts

might be quoted in confirmation of my views, on the subject. But it will not be necessary to advert to more than one such portion of Scripture in that prophet's writings. Jehovah, in the previous verses of the twenty-fifth chapter, had expressed his great indignation at the Ammonites because of the manner in which they had treated his people, and in the conclusion of the seventh verse He addresses them thus :—"I will cause thee to perish out of the countries, I will destroy thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." Let any one consult Calmet's "Biblical Dictionary," and he will see, that so far from the Ammonites being "destroyed" in the sense of their annihilation, they did not even profit by the calamities which befel them, and which were meant by their being "destroyed" for not long after this they were ready to attack, with all possible fury, the children of Israel. But we need not the light of this historical fact to be thrown on the passage, to enable us to understand its meaning. That the destruction of the Ammonites was not to happen, in the annihilation sense of the term, is sufficiently plain from the language of the passage itself. Afterwards God said to them—"I will *destroy* thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." If, then, as the Destructionists construe the word "destroy," this people

had been annihilated, or ceased to exist, it would have been impossible that they should afterwards have known that God was "the Lord."

Very similar in substance to this passage in Ezekiel is the ninth verse of the thirteenth chapter of the book of Hosea. God is represented as saying, in speaking to the Israelites—"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thine help." Taken in the sense in which the Annihilationists interpret the word "destroyed," the people of God—speaking of them as such in their natural character—must have taken away their own lives. But we know this was not the case, because God immediately adds—"But in Me is thine Help." If they had been destroyed, in the Destructionist sense of the word, God would not have afterwards helped them, for there is no instance on record in which He has raised a plurality of persons from the dead, much less a whole people. We have only individual instances of resurrection from the dead, such as that of Lazarus.

But it is possible, finding that the passage in question, if taken literally, is subversive of the Annihilation theory, that the Destructionists may shift their ground, and say that the destruction of the Israelites was to be prospective, not a thing that had taken place. The verse warrants no such

interpretation ; but even supposing we were to concede to the Destructionists, that the latter construction is the right one, and that the destruction spoken of was to take place at an after period, the concession would not avail them. Their theory is that the wicked are to be annihilated—whether at death, or after ages of terrible torments, does not affect the argument—whereas it is said that *after* those of whom God here speaks—and be it remembered, they were as a people wicked—He explicitly proclaimed to them, that in Him was their help. Help from God to the wicked—or their restoration to the Divine favour after death, is a thing which is wholly incompatible with the Destructionist hypothesis. The brief passage would be more in favour of the Universalist theory, of which I shall have to speak hereafter, because its adherents believe in the ultimate salvation of all mankind.

But omitting various other parts of Old Testament Scripture in which the words “destroy,” “destroyed,” “destroyeth,” “destruction,” only mean corrective dispensations of Providence, or earthly punishments which have not the effect of extinguishing life,—I will now call attention to a very few passages out of many in the New Testament which demonstrably prove that the words “destroy,” “destroyeth,” “destroyed,”

“destruction,” do not admit of being regarded as synonymous with the extinction of life, and which consequently cannot be pressed into the service of those who have embraced the Annihilation or Destructionist scheme. I shall take the passages in their chronological order.

First, then, reserving for examination hereafter, as in the case of the Old Testament, those passages to which the Destructionists attach especial importance, because they regard them as particularly favourable to their creed,—let us begin by looking at the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verses of the first chapter of the Gospel by St. Mark. We there read:—
“And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God.”

It will, first of all, be observed, that though the passage begins by referring to one person who had an unclean spirit, we immediately find him speaking in the plural number, as if he were the representative, in his conversation with Christ, of others, or of all who were similarly afflicted. The language addressed to our Lord on this occasion may either be understood as that of the

unclean spirits, or of those who were possessed of them. Practically it is the same thing. The fear expressed was, that Christ had come to destroy them. Now, if they had understood the word "destroy" to mean annihilation, they would have welcomed instead of dreaded that doom, for surely annihilation, which involves entire freedom from pain, must have been preferable to the misery which we know these unclean or evil spirits endured, and which they knew they were still doomed to endure. That this is the right rendering of the passage, is placed beyond all question from the language which we meet with in the other parts of the eighth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, where the two persons there referred to were similarly possessed with devils. "And when," we are told, "He (Christ) was come to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" The word "devils" in this passage is, beyond all doubt, synonymous with the phrase "unclean spirits," in the quotation I have made from the Evangelist Mark; and, indeed, the two passages are in some

respects parallel. In the latter passage there is a terrible clearness in the meaning, so far as relates to the doom of devils. They pray—for even devils pray, and also recognize the deity of our Lord in their prayers to Him—they pray here in the form of a question, “Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” That this really was a prayer, though put in the form of a question, is evident from the thirty-first verse, which is only two verses further on in the chapter. “So the devils,” it is said, “besought Him, saying, If Thou cast us out, suffer us to go into the herd of swine,” which herd of swine was within sight, though it is stated they were a good way off. It is clear in this case that it was future torments, not “destruction,” in the sense in which the latter word is understood by the advocates of annihilation, that the devils dreaded. They were then the subjects of extreme misery. They were so exceeding fierce, that no one could pass near to where they were. And yet, though thus extremely wretched, they knew that still more terrible torments awaited them, and they, like all sinners, sought to avert, as long as possible, the still more fearful doom which was in reserve for them. Annihilation would have been to them a blessing, not a curse; and therefore, if they had believed that to be “destroyed” was

to be the extinction of their existence, according to the notion of the Destructionists, they would have prayed that they *might*, not that they might *not* be destroyed; for surely annihilation is to be preferred to the prospect of intolerable torments, even were those torments not to be of eternal duration.

The next portion of the New Testament in which we meet with the word “destroyed,” as bearing on the question under consideration, is the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Referring to the mighty moral transformation which takes place at the conversion of a sinner, the apostle says:—“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him”—that is, Christ—“that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Now, every believer in Jesus knows from painful experience that the body of sin is not *destroyed*, in the sense of death or annihilation, and neither will it be so long as any of us remain in this world. The destruction of the body of sin is reserved till natural death has done its work upon us.

All that the word “destroyed” here means is, that the power of sin is diminished in our natures when the work of saving grace has been accomplished by the Holy Spirit. This is made evident, if a doubt could have remained upon

the point, by what the apostle says in the twelfth verse of the same chapter. "Let not sin, therefore," are his words, "reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof." Sin ceases to reign over, or to have dominion in the hearts of real Christians; but that is very different from its ceasing to exist. Even Paul Himself bore his testimony, from sad experience, not only to the existence, but to the power of sin within him, even after his conversion, and after he had made greater progress in the divine life than perhaps any other Christian ever did before or since his day. "I see," he said, in the following chapter of this same Epistle to the Romans, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." The apostle, therefore, could not have used the phrase, "that the body of sin might be destroyed," in the sense of annihilation, his own experience being at variance with that acceptance of the word as here employed by him. If the Destructionist interpretation of the term

“destroyed” were to be so accepted, all believers in Christ ought, from the moment of their conversion, to be entirely delivered from sin. Every Christian knows, from the state of his own heart, and his observation of his own life, how very different is the fact.

In the fourteenth chapter of this same Epistle to the Romans we find the apostle remonstrating with those believers in Christ in Rome, who persisted in eating particular kinds of food when they knew it grievously wounded the consciences of other believers. He then, in the fifteenth verse, says:—“If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.” It would manifestly be an entire misconception of the meaning of the apostle, were we to understand him as here employing the word “destroy” as synonymous with the extinction of the life, either bodily or spiritually, of the weak brother to whom he refers. All that Paul intended to convey was, that such an one’s comfort or peace of mind would be diminished were other believers to continue to partake of meat, which he regarded as unlawful or sinful to eat.

In the beginning of the chapter of the same apostle’s first Epistle to the Corinthians, we find him expressing his disapprobation of some

member of the Corinthian church that had been guilty of particular sins. He then goes on, in the fifth verse, to command the other members of that church to “deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.” Will any advocate of the Annihilation system of theology maintain that the word “destruction,” as here employed, means the literal death of the body? I feel persuaded that the most zealous Destructionist now living will not venture to assert that the word admits of such a meaning. It simply means the mortification of the flesh.

Passing over intervening epistles, in which are to be met with other confirmations of our views on this point, we come to the fourteenth and fifteenth verses of the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and this will be the last which I shall quote. Speaking of Christ’s having taken our nature upon Him, the writer of that epistle says :—“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

Taken in the light in which Destructionists

view the word “destroy,” the conclusion to which we would be compelled to come, in interpreting this passage, would be that our Lord had come to destroy Satan himself. Yet we know that cannot be so, as I shall hereafter have occasion to prove—I hope to demonstration. The Evil One will never be destroyed. He will exist through all eternity. What the apostle means in the passage under consideration is substantially the same, though expressed in different phraseology, as that which we find in the eighth verse of the third chapter of the first Epistle of the Apostle John. Listen to the language of the latter apostle: “The Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” That will ultimately be done, but it has not been accomplished yet, nor will it be until Satan, after the end of all things, so far as the present world is concerned, has been “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be there tormented, day and night, for ever and ever!” The word “destroy,” in the latter quotation from Scripture, simply means that Christ came to the world to lessen or diminish, in the present dispensation of grace, the works of the devil, and, by his atoning sacrifice, and the agency of the Holy Spirit, lay a foundation for their eventual destruction, when the existing dispensation of

mercy, like the world, has come to an end ; for in the world to come, Satan will have no opportunity of adding to the countless millions of souls which God, for purposes known only to Himself, permitted the Evil One to ruin in the present world.

I feel assured that I have said enough to prove the entire groundlessness of the assumption of the Annihilationists, that the words "destroy," "destroyed," and "destruction," always mean the extinction of life ; and that, consequently, so far as their theory rests on their view of those words, it has not the slightest claim to our adoption.

THE DOCTRINE OF ANNIHILATION.

PART THIRD.

I HAVE endeavoured in my previous chapters to prove—I hope I have done so successfully—that though the words “destroy,” “destroyed,” “destruction,” do undoubtedly in many parts of Scripture signify extinction of life, yet that in many instances they have no such meaning. I have dwelt at some length on this aspect of the subject, because the advocates of the Annihilation or Destruction theory base on the terms in question their belief in the ultimate extinction of the wicked, either at death or at some subsequent period in a future state. And if we can thus sweep away the foundation, it inevitably follows that the superstructure at once falls to the ground, and lies before us a mass of ruins.

But in order to make our argument complete, that the occurrence in Scripture of the words “destroy,” “destroyed,” “destruction,” does

not give the slightest sanction to the Annihilation or Destruction creed, it is desirable that we should show that the cases in which the Destructionists quote the words in question as justifying their belief in annihilation, afford no real argument in favour of their views. One of the passages in Holy Writ on which the Destructionists lay a special stress, as favourable to their faith in the ultimate destruction of all the ungodly, is the expression in the twentieth verse of the hundred and forty-fifth Psalm, "All the wicked will He (God) destroy." So great is the importance which some of the Destructionists attach to this brief sentence, that they make it a text for sermons, or a motto for their writings, in favour of their Annihilation hypothesis. Now there is not the slightest ground for understanding the word as thus used by David, in the sense of the extinction of life either as regards body or soul. I have referred to every other instance in which the word "destroy" occurs in the Psalms, and I find that in all cases it merely means the natural death of the body, or some afflictive dispensation of Divine providence. I feel a thorough conviction, that every unprejudiced person who has taken the same pains as I have done to ascertain the signification of the word, as used by the Psalmist, will concur with me in the construction

which I put upon it. But the very next verse of the psalm from which I have made the quotation, I hold of itself to be fatal to the Destructionists' belief that the word "destroy" always means annihilation, or the extinction of both body and soul. "My mouth," says David, in the twenty-first verse, "shall speak the praises of the Lord; and let *all* flesh bless his holy name for ever." The latter clause might, with much greater seeming reason, be quoted by the Universalists in support of their theory of the ultimate salvation of the whole human race, than by the Destructionists as an argument in favour of the annihilation of both soul and body, either at death or at some other indefinite period in the future state. If David had believed in the annihilation of the wicked when he employed the word "destroy" in the twentieth verse, it would have been most inconsistent in him to pray, in the twenty-first and following verse, that "*all flesh*," that is, the whole of mankind, might "bless his holy name for ever and ever." So far, therefore, from the Annihilation theory receiving any support from this portion of Scripture, I hold that the passage is "destructive" of it.

I content myself with this one specimen of passages in the Old Testament, which are quoted with much confidence, though without the shadow

of reason, by the Destructionists, as confirmatory of the correctness of their creed. I do not quote others, because it being especially true of the latter part of the Bible that it has brought life and immortality to light, most readers will listen with particular attention to the utterances of Christ and his apostles on the subject.

Let us, then, take the statements and declarations on the question of Annihilation, as given in the Gospels and Epistles, in the order in which we find them in the writings of the Destructionists. And, first of all, let us advert to the words of our Lord, as recorded in the thirteenth and fourteenth verses of the seventh chapter of the Gospel by St. Matthew. "Enter ye in," says Jesus, in that passage, "at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it."

To this portion of Scripture the Destructionists attach an especial importance. It therefore claims an especial attention at our hands. Let us, then, first of all, bring to the remembrance of the reader the fact that it forms part of our Lord's sermon on the mount. Even if it did not, but only occupied an isolated position in the

inspired volume, there would not be found the semblance of a reason for the conclusion that the word "destruction" means, as here employed, the annihilation of the souls and bodies of those who die in their sins. That such is its meaning is pure assumption, as a few words will suffice to show. The word "destruction" is synonymous with the word "perdition," as will be seen in the ninth verse of the sixth chapter of the first Epistle to Timothy, where Paul, speaking of particular sins, of which he enumerates a number, says that they "drown men in destruction and perdition." Now, that "perdition" does not always mean annihilation is so evident from various portions of Scripture, that I cannot understand how any intelligent person can put the former construction upon it. That "perdition" means punishment or misery, is placed beyond all doubt by the eighth verse of the seventeenth chapter of Revelation. "The beast," says the angel who is holding converse with St. John—"the beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

That the “perdition” to which the beast is here said to go was not perdition in the sense of the extinction of life, is proved by what is said at the close of the passage. There it is stated, after the beast has been consigned to “perdition,” that he “*yet is.*” He could not, consequently, have been annihilated when the sentence of perdition which had been pronounced upon him began to be carried into execution.

But it is not necessary to pass beyond the limits of our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, of which the passage quoted by the Destructionists, as proving the truth of their hypothesis, forms a part. That portion of his sermon which constitutes the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses of the fifth chapter, would of itself suffice to overthrow the Annihilation scheme, were there no other portion of Scripture subversive of it. “Agree,” says our Lord to the multitude who were at the time listening to Him,—“agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.”

No scriptural commentator, or other divine,

so far as I am aware, has ever doubted that our Lord, by this figurative language, intended to impress on his audience what would be the fate at the day of judgment of those sinners who would not be reconciled to God, but persisted in their rebellion against Him. They were, under the similitude of debtors, first to be brought before the judge, and he, having found that they had contracted obligations which they would not or could not discharge, ordered them to be consigned to prison. Had the words of Jesus ended here there would have been enough in them to “annihilate” the Destructionist creed; for imprisonment and extinction of life are things so different that no one could confound them. But our Lord’s language did not end in consigning the debtor or sinner to prison. He added still more awful words,—words to which I shall have occasion to refer in a future chapter, as proving the eternity of future punishment.” “Thou shalt,” He said, “by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.” Surely there is no countenance to the Destructionist notion here. With the word imprisonment no one ever associates the idea of death. Imprisonment is synonymous with punishment in the shape of confinement in a gloomy cell, to privation of comforts, and to suffering both of body and of

mind. And such, as proved by the passage in question, will be the doom, not the annihilation, of all the ungodly.

The next passage of New Testament Scripture which the Destructionists quote in support of their theory—and it is in their view the most important and conclusive of all—is that which constitutes the twenty-eighth verse of the tenth chapter of the same Gospel of St. Matthew. The verse is part of an address of our Lord to his disciples. “And fear not them,” says our Saviour, “which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him which is able to kill both soul and body in hell.” That any body or soul will be, in a spiritual sense, killed, so far as that opinion rests on this portion of Scripture, is, on the very face of the passage, the most unwarranted notion that ever was entertained, so far as my reading extends, by any person possessing even an approach to average judgment. The verse does not give the slightest countenance to the notion that God ever *will* destroy a single soul or single body in the sense in which the Destructionists understand the word “destroy.” No one doubts the power or ability of God, were He so disposed, to destroy, not one soul or body only, but the souls and the bodies of the whole human race. He who created the

soul and body of man can, unquestionably, if such were his sovereign pleasure, destroy both the one and the other. As by the breathing of his mouth God called man, in his compound nature, into existence, so by the breath of his mouth He could destroy man in regard alike to his soul and body. But the question is not what God *can* do in relation to this point, but what He *will* do. Now the verse in question does not afford the most slender reason for the belief that God *will* in one single instance destroy the soul and body of any of his intelligent creatures. It simply says that He *can* do it,—that is, if so disposed; but the whole current of Scripture runs in the direction of affirming, that He will *not* destroy one single soul or body which He has created. The words of our Lord, “But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell,” simply constitute an assertion of the almighty power of God, and that, therefore, mankind are to stand in awe only of Him who is possessed of this power, and not to be afraid of those whose power does not extend beyond that of killing the body.

So far indeed from this passage giving any countenance to the idea that God *will* destroy the soul and body of any of his creatures, it inculcates, if rightly understood, the very contrary

doctrine. Its meaning, in an amplified form, is this,—that the souls of all mankind are immortal, and therefore cannot be destroyed by any power which any of their fellow-men do or can possess, and that, consequently, we are not to be afraid of any of our fellow-men, but that we are to fear or be afraid of Him who alone has this power, were He disposed to exercise it. God, in relation to all things, is omnipotent. There are no limits to his power; but we know, from other perfections which are equally essential parts of his character, that He will never exercise almighty power for such a purpose as the one in question. And the whole tenor of Scripture is to the effect that God will punish those who die in their sins by real, living, extreme suffering, instead of displaying the greatness of his power in the annihilation both of their bodily and spiritual life.

The next passage of New Testament Scripture on which the Destructionists lay great stress, as being, as they assume, favourable to their views, is that which will be found in the fortieth and forty-first verses of the thirtieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. In St. Paul's memorable sermon at Antioch, in which he had preached the glorious doctrine of a full and free forgiveness through the merits of the Lord Jesus

Christ, he goes on to address these words of admonition and remonstrance to those to whom he wrote:—"Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

The assumed argument in this passage in favour of the doctrine of Annihilation is grounded on the word "perish," as applied to the "despisers" of Christ and his gospel. But the word "perish," though meaning in some parts of Scripture annihilation, or the extinction of life, does not admit of that construction in this particular passage, neither does it in various other portions of Holy Writ. Any one will be satisfied of this who takes the trouble to consult those other parts of Scripture in which the word occurs. The term is often synonymous with being punished or lost, in the sense of not again being restored to the position or favourable circumstances in which the parties were formerly placed. "The preaching of the Cross," says Paul, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, "is to them that perish foolishness,"—that is, it is so to them who will be lost, or not saved, not to them who will be annihilated. On the other hand, the preaching

of the cross is to them that are saved the power of God. The contrast here is between those who already are, as well as will be, finally saved, and those who already are, as well as will be, lost for ever. It will be observed that the apostle speaks in the present tense. If there could be a doubt of this as regards those to whom the preaching of the Cross is foolishness, that doubt would be removed by the other clause which relates to the righteous, or to those to whom the gospel is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Of the latter it is said that they are already saved. "But unto us who *are* saved," are the words of the apostle. "It," namely, the preaching of the Cross, "is the power of God and the wisdom of God." If, therefore, the word "perish" is thus applied to the wicked while they are alive, and may live for many years, just as the phrase, "to us who *are* saved," is applied to the righteous, is it not a manifest misconception of the meaning of language to maintain that the word "perish" invariably implies annihilation?

The question now comes to be, Does the word "perish," as employed in the particular passage of Scripture under consideration, mean the destruction of both body and soul, according to the Annihilation theory? I unhesitatingly answer the question in the negative. I maintain

that the word has no such meaning here; and I am fortified in my conviction by the views of all those divines of any eminence with whose writings I am acquainted, who have adverted to it. They regard the passages alluded to by Paul as being "in the prophets," to be those in the fourteenth verse of the twenty-ninth chapter of the book of Isaiah, and the fifth verse of the first chapter of the book of Habakkuk. Now, it will be seen that in neither of these passages—to which I refer the reader without quoting them—is there a single word which would justify the Destructionist notion that the word "perish," in the quotation from the Acts, is to be considered a convertible term with annihilation. In both of these Old Testament cases terms occur which conclusively show that the words spoken by Jehovah had no reference whatever to the extinction of life, but to punishments which would be inflicted by God on his people Israel, because the wonders which had been wrought in their presence had produced no salutary impression upon them, and also, because He knew that those yet to be wrought would be equally unproductive of any saving or sanctifying results on their minds and hearts. When Paul made use of the words which he grounded on those of God, as recorded in the writings of the prophets Isaiah and

Habakkuk. "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish," those "despisers" ought, according to the Destructionist creed, to have been annihilated immediately after the apostle had spoken the words; but instead of that he tells those who heard them spoken by him, that God would, after the time of his speaking, work a work which they would in no wise believe. This passage in the Acts, therefore, on which the Destructionists lay so much stress, gives no countenance whatever to their scheme. The words are simply meant as Paul used them, that those despisers of Christ and his gospel, who lived and died in the frame of mind which the language implies, would, according to a very common form of expression, "die," or perish "in their sins,"—that is, be lost for ever,—which is a very different thing from the annihilation of either soul or body, much less of both.

The next portion of Scripture which the advocates of the Annihilation scheme quote with greatest confidence as to the confirmation which it gives to that scheme, is the twenty-second verse of the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. "What if God," says Paul, "willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" Surely there could be no comparison between the greatness of the

display of God's power or wrath in visiting the wicked with the annihilation of both soul and body, and that which would be given by casting them into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, there to remain, according to the creed of certain other Destructionists, for an indefinite period. The word "wrath" occurs ninety-five times in the Bible, and in no one instance, when used in relation to God, do I find that any other meaning is attached to it, than that it is expressive of the Divine anger or displeasure, in association with the punishment of those who are the objects of God's wrath. Do not the Destructionists, therefore, manifestly pervert the meaning of words when they interpret the term "wrath," in relation to the final doom of the wicked, as merely meaning annihilation,—a doom which is entirely free from all sense of suffering, from all consciousness of any kind?

Next, among the Annihilationist arguments from the Scripture, is the seventh verse of the third chapter of Peter's second Epistle. "But the heavens and the earth," it is there said, "which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." I know not in what terms to express my amazement that this portion of the inspired volume should be

quoted, in support of his views, by any believer in the annihilation of soul and body simultaneously with the moment of our death. The phrase, "day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men," means, beyond all question, the day of the general judgment. It is then that the perdition of ungodly men will, strictly speaking, commence, because then soul and body will be reunited and will be conjoined together in the same dismal destiny. But how, or for what purpose, could this reunion take place of both soul and body, when both may have already been many thousands of years annihilated or entirely destroyed? Those Destructionists who maintain that the moment a sinner dies, in the sense of a natural death, both his body and soul are annihilated, are shut up, in quoting the passage in question in support of their creed, to the necessity of believing and admitting that there will be a resurrection and reunion of both body and soul, in order that after the interval, be it long or short, in which their bodies have lain in the grave, they may on the day of judgment be annihilated a *second* time. There is no escaping this alternative.

THE DOCTRINE OF ANNIHILATION.

PART FOURTH.

THERE is, I am aware, a second death spoken of in the Scriptures, but though the Destructionists quote it in support of their creed, a moment's examination will suffice to show that it gives no more countenance to their Annihilation scheme, than the other texts which they adduce as favourable to it. The passage is in the fourteenth and fifteenth verses of the twentieth chapter of Revelation. "And death and hell," says the inspired seer on the Isle of Patmos, "were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

I have before expressed my surprise that any one could have, no matter on what grounds, embraced the Destructionist theory in the sense of the annihilation of body and soul in the case

of the ungodly being contemporaneous with the death of the physical part of their nature. But my surprise is greater still that these two verses should be adduced as establishing that scheme. I hold that, on the contrary, it is a passage of Holy Writ which would suffice, if we had no other, to completely and at once subvert the Annihilation theory, in either of its forms.

It will be seen on perusing the context that the general judgment of mankind, including the righteous and wicked alike, has taken place, and that, as a preliminary step to the grand assize, not only "death," which applies equally to the godly and the ungodly, has given up those who were in their graves, but that hell had also delivered up its dead. This universal resurrection is immediately followed by the general judgment. The whole of the vast assembly, the largest perhaps the universe ever saw or will see—certainly the largest under similar circumstances—is judged according to the works of each individual in the countless throng. The result of the awful audit is that those whose names are found in the Book of Life are received into glory, while those whose names are not found in that book are "cast into the lake of fire." Could the mind of man conceive anything more entirely incompatible with that phase of the

Destructionist theory which maintains that the moment the bodies of the ungodly die both soul and body are annihilated? The inconceivably momentous transactions which are adverted to in the passage thus quoted by the Destructionists in favour of their faith, will take place thousands of years after the great majority of those so raised from the dead, so judged, and so condemned to future punishment, had been consigned to their graves, and who, according to those who have embraced the Destructionist creed, had been annihilated, both in relation to the life of the soul and that of the body.

The passage in question is one which is a special favourite with the Rev. Mr. Maurice, when he is dealing with the question of future punishments. Those who are most intimate with himself and his writings, are fully persuaded that, though he may not openly avow his belief in the doctrine of annihilation at death, that is one essential part of his theological creed. I have not been able to prove conclusively from any of his writings that it is so, and yet I share the conviction of those of his friends to whom I have referred, that he is an Annihilationist. When it suits his purpose, Mr. Maurice can be as clear as other writers, but when he has reasons for concealing his meaning, no man can be more mys-

tical. In relation to the point under consideration, we find him, on the concluding page of his "Theological Essays," writing as follows:—"What dreams of ours can reach to the assertion of St. John, that Death and Hell themselves shall be cast into the lake of fire? I cannot fathom the meaning of such expressions. But they are written. I accept them, and give thanks for them. I feel there is an abyss of death into which I may sink and be lost." There is no idea of suffering in what Mr. Maurice calls an abyss of death in which he may be lost. I do not see how any one wishing to shield him from the charge of being an Annihilationist, could explain away this phraseology, so as that it should be purged from the annihilation element as regards the ungodly, when they have become the inhabitants of a future world. But in after parts of this volume I shall have occasion to revert to the views of Mr. Maurice in relation to the Destructionist theory.

In the meantime it is desirable that I should not leave any misconceptions in the minds of my readers with regard to the interpretations which are put by the Destructionists on the passage in the Revelation to which I have been adverting. All Destructionists do not understand the phrase as proving their theory so far as it relates to

annihilation at death. A considerable number, indeed I believe a large majority, understand the passage as applicable to what will take place after the general judgment has been finished. My further observations will have reference to both phases of the Annihilation theory.

The phrase, "second death," occurs in three other places in this same book of Revelation. In the eleventh verse of the second chapter it is said: "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." The word "hurt," clearly indicates that whatever the "second death" may be, it is a thing which is connected with, or will cause, pain; for with annihilation no one ever associates the idea of suffering. Where there is entire unconsciousness there can be no pain. The "second death" therefore cannot mean the instantaneous and entire destruction of body and soul. Archbishop Tillotson, in his annotations on this passage, says: "The second death is a state of misery, which is as bad or worse than death, and may properly enough be called by that name; and for this reason the punishment of wicked men after the day of judgment is frequently and fitly in this book of Revelation called "the second death.'" My reasons, it may be well to

mention, for quoting the opinion of Archbishop Tillotson on this point, in preference to any one out of scores of eminent theologians whose views are substantially the same as his, is that, as I shall show hereafter, the archbishop was a believer in the doctrine of ultimate universal restoration. Yet he was no believer in the doctrine of Annihilation, and, consequently, could not quote the passage under consideration in favour of his views.

The second part of the Revelation in which we meet with the words "second death," is the sixth verse of the twentieth chapter. If the words as they here occur were to be understood literally, the "second death" would precede the Millennium, for it is distinctly stated that those over whom the "second death" will have no power, are to reign on earth with Christ a thousand years; but as that cannot be, inasmuch as it is most explicitly stated that the "second death" will take place *after* the general judgment, the meaning obviously is, that the "second death" will have no power over the saints of God when it does take place. The third passage in which we meet with the phrase "second death," is in the eighth verse of the twenty-first chapter of this book of Revelation. "But," we are there told, "the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable,

and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death.”

I shall have to recur to this portion of Scripture. In the meantime, after enumerating those who are to be cast into the lake, I would call attention to the words, “ shall have their part ” in it. To have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, clearly involves the fact, not of their being consumed or annihilated, but their place of abode. It bears out the language of the prophet Isaiah when he puts the question, “ Who shall *dwell* with everlasting burnings ? ”

These are the other three references which are made in the Revelation to a second death. They may not be so explicit as to remove all doubt as to what is the exact meaning of the words, but we may be able to come to a more definite conclusion on that point, by endeavouring to understand what is implied in the words, that “ death and hell ” being “ cast into the lake of fire,” constitutes “ the second death.”

In the twentieth verse of the nineteenth chapter we read that “ the beast and the false prophet were both cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.” Now I cannot see

how any advocate of the theory of annihilation at death can believe in the annihilation of the wicked immediately after the general judgment has closed, with this parallel passage present to their minds. I do not pause to inquire who or what the beast and the false prophet are ; that is not necessary to my argument. It is enough for me to know that some enemies of God and of souls are in the end to be cast *alive* into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. To be cast *alive* into the lake in question, is an event wholly irreconcilable with destruction either at death, or immediately after the judgment day. This view of the subject is still more fully and clearly brought out in the tenth verse of the same twentieth chapter. “And,” it is there said, “the devil that deceived them”—that is mankind—“was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever.” Now surely if any language could disprove the doctrine of annihilation at death, the language here employed must accomplish that end.

The only other portion of Scripture in which the expression “second death” occurs is in the eighth verse of the next or twenty-first chapter. In the seventh verse it is said, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his

God, and he shall be my son.” Then we read in the verse which follows :—“ But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : this is the second death.” There is not even the slightest ground here for the notion that this doom of the ungodly involves or implies destruction. The manifest purport of the passage is, that the doom of the wicked will be one of extreme sorrow and suffering. The phraseology employed by the inspired seer is evidently meant to convey the idea that the contrast between the righteous and the wicked at the last will be complete and continuous. He that overcometh is to inherit all things, not temporarily, but in perpetuity, or for ever and ever. The believer in Christ appointed to a place in heaven, will find that place one of supreme enjoyment. The expression, “ inherit *all* things,” implies that. On the other hand, the fact that the unsaved are to “ have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone,” no less evidently points to a state of extreme misery, not, certainly, to annihilation, which is necessarily and eternally incompatible with a state of suffering or misery.

Various theories have been hazarded as to

who the beast and the false prophet are; but whatever diversity of views may be entertained on that point, all commentators are agreed that they belong to the human race. Well, then, let the fact be clearly borne in mind, that the beast and false prophet both *are* already, at the time here spoken of, in the lake of fire and brimstone, manifestly suffering, but not annihilated or consumed. But if there could, which, however, there cannot be, a doubt on this point, that doubt would be at once removed by what follows. The devil is to be a sharer of their destiny, for he is to be cast into the same lake of fire and brimstone with themselves, and “shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

How any man who possesses an ordinary understanding can believe in the annihilation of the ungodly at death in the presence of this passage of Scripture, is altogether beyond my comprehension. There is a singular force in the language. Not only does it prove that the devil and wicked men are to be sharers of the same dismal destiny—in other words, are to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, there to suffer torments immeasurably greater than we can conceive—but that there is to be neither cessation nor end to their sufferings. They are to “be tormented day and night.” They are not to have

one moment's intermission to their agonies; and their torments are to be eternal. They are to last for ever and ever. They will never have an end any more than those who suffer them will have even a moment's respite. Is it not, I repeat, strange beyond all thought, that there should be many myriads in this country who should be conversant with a passage of Holy Writ so very plain, and yet believe in the annihilation or destruction, both as regards the bodies and souls of the wicked, either at death, or immediately after the close of the general judgment?

But I need not pursue the point at greater length. I hold that there is conclusive, though it may be only inferential, evidence that in each of the passages of Scripture in which the phrase, "second death," occurs, it means a state of suffering, not annihilation, or a state of unconsciousness,—which last is the same as a state of perfect immunity from pain. But while not myself dwelling further on the expression in question, with the view of showing that it furnishes no ground for believing in the doctrine of annihilation at death, or after the general judgment, it may be well to state for the information of those—if any such among my readers there be—that those Destructionists who have embraced the theory of annihilation after an indefinitely pro-

longed period of suffering, concur with me in the view which I have taken of the four portions of Revelation in which the expression is to be found. I need hardly add that all the Universalists, or believers in the ultimate restoration of the entire human race to holiness, and happiness, and admission at last into heaven, reject, as decidedly as I do, the notion of those who have embraced the doctrine of destruction at death, that the passages in question give any—even the slightest—countenance to that phase of the Annihilation theory.

The passages of Scripture to which I have thus adverted are those on which the section of Destructionists with whom I am now dealing mainly rely as proving the truth of their theory. There are some other arguments, but they are only advanced as constituting subsidiary ones in favour of their creed. It is not necessary, therefore, to refer to them.

Having thus, I hope conclusively, shown the entire erroneousness of the views which the Destructionists take of those portions of Scripture on which they chiefly base their belief in annihilation at death, the next thing which I would do, had I space, would be to cite a number of scriptural texts which prove, with the force of moral demonstration, that the Annihilation theory is

not, and cannot be, in accordance with the Word of God. But that may not be. I regret, however, the circumstance less, because, when I come, in a future chapter, to consider the question of eternal punishments, I shall have occasion to recur indirectly to several of those passages in both divisions of the Bible, which are wholly subversive of the Annihilation belief. Just now, I content myself with quoting a few of the words of our Lord, and one passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews, in relation to the point.

Take, then, as my first proof from the words of Jesus, that death is not the annihilation of both body and soul, what He said respecting the man who went to the feast without having on the wedding garment: "Then, said the King"—our Lord Himself—"to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Is there anything like the entire and final extinction of life here! Is there not, on the contrary, the very reverse of annihilation in these words of Christ? To be "bound hand and foot" is surely a very different thing from being destroyed both body and soul for ever. Not the less is this true in relation to the phrase, "take him away." That is practically what is said and done in our judicial courts with

regard to great criminals when sentenced to be punished. Nor can any argument, or even the semblance of an argument, for annihilation at death, be found in the expression, "and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." If the ungodly were annihilated at death, they would be wholly unconscious of any degree of darkness, however "outer" it might be, and they would be no less incapable of experiencing that weeping and gnashing of teeth of which our Lord speaks,—words which, so far from sanctioning the idea of annihilation, are forcibly expressive of anguish of mind and agony of body.

This language of Jesus in relation to the ungodly is substantially the same as that which we find in the parable of the tares and the wheat. The tares, meaning the wicked, are to be cast into a furnace of fire, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. If they were only cast into a furnace of fire that they might be instantaneously consumed, there could be no wailing and gnashing of teeth. In the same thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew we have a repetition by our Lord of nearly the same language, as to what the doom of the wicked will be. The angels are to sever the wicked from among the just, as in the parable of which I have

previously spoken. The good and bad fish are taken in a net, and the latter are to be cast into a furnace of fire, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Precisely the same is said of the "unprofitable servant," mentioned by our Lord in the twenty-fifth chapter of the same Gospel. In the latter chapter Jesus uses even stronger language than this, when speaking of the doom of the ungodly, as their ungodliness is shown by their not loving and sympathizing with his disciples in their seasons of sorrow. "Depart from Me," He says, "ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The words of Jesus are stronger here than those other words of his which I have just quoted, inasmuch as they explicitly assert not only the fact that they will be tormented, but that their torments will be eternal.

But I now come to the apostolic utterances on the subject.

To show that the apostles of Christ many years after his crucifixion preached the same doctrine of future punishments, it may be desirable to give one quotation out of the many that might be made. I will give the passage in the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, beginning with the twenty-eighth verse and ending with the thirty-first. "He," said the

inspired penman of that Epistle, “that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” This passage of Scripture is, on the very face of it, entirely fatal to the Annihilation scheme. Not only is there to be future punishment for the wicked, but there will be different degrees of it. Those who live under the Gospel dispensation, and are not saved, will receive a much greater punishment than those who lived under the Mosaic economy. But all who have died, or will hereafter die, in their sins, will be visited with the “vengeance” of God. The term “vengeance” implies continuous punishment, and could not by any ingenuity be made equivalent to the extinction of life as regards both soul and body,—a view of the passage which is confirmed in the concluding verse. “It is,” it is there said, “a fearful thing

to fall into the hands of the living God.” The very phrase, to fall into God’s hands, implies a terrible punishment, but the phrase is made still more awfully significant when the adjective “fearful” is prefixed to it. Assuredly there is nothing like the idea of “destruction” involved in the passage in question, any more than in those other portions of Scripture to which I have called attention. On the contrary, the passage effectually lays the axe at the root of the Annihilation scheme. It seems to me to be also conclusive as to the eternity of future punishments. “The living God” is a phrase which means the *ever-living* God. And if the eternity of God is thus asserted in connection with the infliction of the future punishment of the wicked, the obvious inference is that the punishment will be eternal. But I only make these observations by way of parenthesis, inasmuch as I have before remarked, the question of eternal punishments will come under my consideration in a future chapter.

For the present, in the way of proving that the doctrine of the final and eternal destruction of the wicked at death, is utterly destitute of foundation, I will content myself with one more scriptural reference. It is one of an awful kind, and I would bespeak the most profound attention to it of any reader who may be conscious of a

tendency to adopt the Destructionist scheme. The passage is in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of the sixth chapter of the Revelation. After speaking in the previous verse of the ungodly seeking to hide themselves, on the advent of the general judgment, in the dens, and the rocks, and the mountains, they are represented as saying to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the face of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" The ungodly, as here described, are no longer, if they ever were, believers in the Annihilation creed. But they wish it were true. They feel that destruction, complete and eternal, would be infinitely preferable to the doom which hangs over them. Hence their prayers—persons who never in reality prayed to God—to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and cover them from the face of their Judge. They are filled with consternation, they are struck with horror, now that the day of the wrath of the Lamb has come. And yet amidst all the confusion which overwhelms them, they know that God would not hear their prayer for annihilation; and therefore, in the terrible despair with which their souls are seized, they cry to the inanimate rocks and mountains to fall upon and annihilate them. But

the rocks and the mountains do not, any more than God would, had their prayers been made to Him, heed their cry. There is no annihilation for them. They must endure the Divine displeasure,—the wrath of the Lamb, in the form of the most fearful torments.

Thus far my arguments in opposition to the Destructionists' hypothesis are for the most part equally available in relation to both phases of their theory, namely, annihilation contemporaneously with death, or after the solemnities of the general judgment have come to a termination.

Let me now make some observations which will relate solely to the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked at the time of their death. That aspect of the Annihilation hypothesis can be proved to be groundless by a few general considerations had we no other proof. The Scriptures, it will be admitted by all who recognize their Divine origin and authority, clearly reveal, and emphatically affirm, that there will be a general resurrection and a general judgment,—a resurrection and judgment in the results of which the wicked as well as the righteous will be interested. In various parts of the Old Testament this great truth is clearly enunciated; but it stands out so broadly in the book of Daniel as to render it impossible for any one believing in the inspiration of Scrip-

ture to doubt that the wicked as well as the righteous will be raised from their graves, and, with body and soul reunited, shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ. I hold, indeed, that it would not be possible to employ language more explicit than that which we find in the second verse of the twelfth chapter of Daniel, regarding a universal resurrection. I know of no commentator or other divine who has written on the passage, that has felt the slightest doubt that it refers to the general resurrection. The previous verse, indeed, is sufficiently plain on the point. "And many of them," says Daniel, "who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." If the death of the wicked be their annihilation for ever, how could it be said of them that they are to awake, or again become alive? Annihilation, in the Destructionists' sense of the word, means the extinction of life for ever. It means, though some of the Annihilationists may not like the phrase, because it was the favourite phrase of the Atheists who figured in the French Revolution of 1792, "eternal sleep." The language of Daniel demolishes the Destructionists' scheme, so far as relates to annihilation at the time of the death of the ungodly. There it is shown that the wicked shall,

at the last day, as certainly rise from their graves as the righteous. “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.” The word “many,” it is right here to remark, means *all*, just as in the Epistle to the Romans the expression, “By one man’s disobedience *many* were made sinners,” demonstrably signifies *all*, in accordance with that other declaration of Scripture, “That in Adam *all* have sinned.” Some of the “many,” namely, the righteous, shall, it is added, awake to everlasting life, and “some,” namely, the wicked, “to everlasting shame and contempt.” Here it is clearly stated, that not only do all rise again from their graves, but that some, that is, as has just been stated, the wicked, arise to shame and everlasting contempt. That statement implies misery. They will themselves be ashamed of their position after they have been awakened by the sound of the last trumpet; and no less will they reproach themselves for, and be ashamed of, the course of conduct which they pursued when here on earth, and which has brought them to the degraded and contemned condition in which they now find themselves, in the estimation of all the wise and good in God’s creation. They who had believed in annihilation when they were in this world, will find out to their inconceivable horror on

that day, the fearful mistake into which they had fallen.

And to aggravate the wretchedness of their position, they will find that the other phase of the Destructionists' theory, namely, annihilation after a period of torment more or less prolonged, is no less baseless than was, when here, their belief that annihilation was contemporaneous with death. That word "everlasting"—that awful word as it is brought before us in this case—will ring in their ears with a sound second only, in the horror it will inspire, to the terrible tones of the trumpet, blown by the archangel, which will thrill through their whole frame as it breaks on their ears in their graves, and with irresistible power compels them to come forth to appear before the Great White Throne. The shame and contempt, in other words, the utter wretchedness of those who had died in their sins, will be "everlasting." But on this point I will not speak now; it will come with greater propriety under consideration when I advert to the question of the duration of future punishments.

With a clearness, too, and a solemnity not surpassed by any words which proceeded from the lips of our Lord when He was a sojourner in this world, did He proclaim the great truth of a general resurrection,—of a resurrection of the wicked, just as explicitly and emphatically as that

of the righteous. "Marvel not at this," He said, as recorded in the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth verses of the fifth chapter of the Gospel by St. John, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Could any form of words be employed that would more plainly affirm the doctrine of the resurrection of the wicked, than the declaration, in this passage, of our Lord, that "those who have done evil" shall come forth from their graves "unto the resurrection of damnation"? With those words of Jesus present to the mind, it is not only surprising, but to me incomprehensible, that any one who recognizes the infallible teaching of Him who spoke as never man spake, should fail to perceive that these solemn and explicit words, proceeding from his Divine lips, could mean anything else than a state of torment, as the doom of the ungodly in a future state.

Then there will be the general judgment. That comes immediately after the resurrection. It is not necessary that I should make any citations of Scripture to prove this. Every reader of the Bible is conversant with the various portions of that book

which state the fact of a general and final judgment, and the awfully momentous circumstances under which the great transaction will take place. Does it accord with the voice of Reason, even supposing the voice of Revelation were silent on the subject, that all the solemnities of the scene should be witnessed—the Great White Throne set—the books opened, and the whole intelligent universe of God being present, in response to the summons of the Great Supreme,—were the sentence passed upon the wicked by Christ the Judge, “Depart from Me, ye cursed,” to mean no more than their eternal annihilation? If annihilation was to be their doom, it surely would have sufficed, surely would have met the views of God, that the wicked should have remained in their graves, and not have undergone the process of resurrection, or be subjected to the forms of a final judgment.

While I have thus endeavoured to prove, at considerable length, that the theory of the annihilation of both body and soul at death is wholly devoid of scriptural sanction, it is due to those who advocate the notion, that I should mention that they strenuously repudiate the idea of denying future punishment. They maintain that the entire and eternal destruction of man’s being, in his compound character of body and soul, is

punishment sufficiently great to vindicate all that the Bible says respecting the punishment of the wicked in the world to come. They say that to be for ever excluded from heaven is not only a fearful but an eternal punishment. One hardly knows how to deal with so extraordinary an argument as this, if, indeed, it ought to be called an argument at all. Pain, whether bodily or mental, or both, is of the very essence of punishment. Where there is no pain there can be no punishment. But annihilation means the utter extinction of all life, and consequently a perfect exemption from suffering of any kind or in any form. It might be said with as much propriety that the very stones on the street are accessible to pain, as that those whose body and soul are totally annihilated could be punished in a future state,—if the phrase “future state” can be properly applied to them; for they will be as entirely unconscious of anything and everything in the universe of God as are those stones on the street on which we daily tread.

But there is another argument against the Annihilation scheme which I hold to be, like many others, wholly unanswerable, and entirely subversive of that scheme, even if the argument stood alone. Our Lord lays it down as a maxim, which will in every case prove an unfailing test of the

truth or otherwise of any doctrine, or system of doctrines. A tree, He tell us, is known by its fruits. Every good tree, He adds, bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. What, then, must be the consequences of the doctrine of complete and eternal destruction of both body and soul at death? The inevitable effect of believing that there will be no suffering in any form, or of any kind, in another world, must be to trifle with, and indulge in, the practice of sin. In effect, indeed, there is no future state in the view of those persons who have embraced this scheme. Death with them is practically just the same as with those Atheists, who regard it as nothing more nor less than “an eternal sleep.” This class of Destructionists, therefore, know of no other motive to deter them from even the worst crimes against society, except that which arises from the punishment which is exacted by the laws of the land. These are, consequently, if the Annihilation system be true, wiser than God. Society by its laws punishes transgressors against it, more or less severely, according to the measure of their guilt; but God permits the greatest sinner against Himself to commit his sins with impunity. Is not the very idea a fearful reflection on the wisdom of God as the Supreme Governor of the universe? It is a

mere and manifest abortion of an argument that the ungodly will, in their own estimation, be punished by their exclusion from heaven. It is notorious that considerations of this kind never enter the mind of the unconverted. They have no love for heaven, because it is a place of holiness which is entirely opposed to their nature. What reader of these remarks has not more or less frequently met with sinners who have blasphemously said, that if they only were permitted to remain in and enjoy this world, they would allow God to keep his heaven to Himself? It is not that the ungodly wish to reach heaven, but that they wish to escape hell, or a place of future punishment, which weighs with them. And, therefore, the doctrine of annihilation at death is one which they naturally roll as a sweet morsel under their tongue. Corrupt human nature is sure to wish that the doctrine of annihilation at death were true; and we all know, as I remarked in a previous part of this work, that what we wish to be true, we very easily believe to be so. The greatest of our English poets—the greatest, indeed, that ever dazzled the world, by the brilliancy of his genius—said most truly in relation to a particular case, and thereby proved how correctly he understood human nature,—“The wish is father to the thought.”

To my mind it also comes home with the resistless force of demonstration, that were the world to embrace the doctrine of eternal annihilation of soul and body at death, the gospel of Christ would be preached without effect. It would gain no trophies in the form of conversion. Its ministers would labour in vain. Their most solemn appeals to the unconverted to believe in Christ, would be wholly disregarded. They would fall on their ears as a tale that had often been told. The fear of future punishment, as expressed by the word "hell," is a preliminary step to the exercise of a saving faith in Christ. Fear arises from the consciousness of guilt, mingled with the knowledge that guilt involves the punishment of the guilty. Deep convictions of sin, with the certainty of a consequent fearful punishment in a future state, can alone prepare the mind for resorting to and trusting in the Saviour of sinners. Let the ungodly only be persuaded that their doom will, at death, be annihilation, and they will never come to Christ at all. There is not one single case of conversion recorded in the New Testament in which there was not the previous consciousness of deserving hell, and the consequent dread of being doomed to endure the Divine displeasure in a future state. Does, let me ask, any adherent of the Destructionist

system of faith really believe that when the jailer in the agony of his soul, caused by his convictions of sin, cried out, "What shall I do to be saved?" he simply dreaded the idea of annihilation? Is any one who has embraced that creed prepared to affirm, that when the three thousand under Peter's memorable sermon were pricked to the heart, and in the intensity of their convictions cried out, "Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?"—they so felt and so spoke, not from the fear of torments in a future state, but from the dread of annihilation? I cannot believe—I will not believe—that any such person can be found. It is, I repeat, the consciousness that they deserve, and the terrible apprehension that they will receive, eternal punishment for their sins in another world, that all sinners come to Christ that ever do come to Him. And not only so, but if ministers of the gospel believed that the worst that could befall the rejecters of Christ and the workers of iniquity, even in its most aggravated form, would be annihilation at death, they would not, they could not, constituted as human nature is, labour for the conversion of sinners with that zeal, or anything at all approaching to it, which our Lord and his apostles displayed every hour of their lives when seeking the salvation of the lost. It was to pull

sinner out of the fire, to pluck them from the flames, which were in a sense already gathering around them, that Christ and his first disciples lived, and laboured.

There is yet another argument which appears to me wholly unanswerable against the Destructionist hypothesis, so far as relates to that phase of it which assumes that the annihilation of soul and body takes place at death. It is this,—that if the doctrine be true, it necessarily follows that there is a practical confounding of all those distinctions between what human society universally recognizes as existing between different classes of crimes or sins. The Destructionist creed recognizes, with regard to ultimate consequences, no degrees in human guilt. All classes of the wicked are viewed in its eye as being on the same footing in relation to the degree of their guilt. The most virtuous man that ever lived will, if he dies unconverted, meet with the same doom at death as the most atrocious criminal that ever trod the earth, according to the Annihilation system. Entire and eternal destruction will be the portion of each. The latter will be for ever just as exempt from suffering or sorrow in any shape as the former. The amiable and moral young man mentioned in the gospel as having come to Christ anxious to inherit eternal life, and

whom our Lord loved, will fare no better, according to the Destructionist system of belief, than Judas himself. Annihilation will be equally the lot of each. Is it not truly marvellous that men of intelligence, men who can know and appreciate, so far as this world is concerned, the differences which exist in the degrees of guilt, should be so blinded by their peculiar beliefs, as thus practically to represent God as confounding all those distinctions in sin and crime, which even men themselves, erring, because sinful creatures, universally recognize and act upon. Yet so it is in the case of all those who have embraced the doctrine of Annihilation. Even reason might suffice to prevent the possibility of any rational person falling into this error. But when we come to the teaching of Scripture on the point, we stand absolutely lost in amazement that such a notion could ever have found an entrance into any human mind. Everywhere throughout the Word of God we meet with the most solemn and energetic declarations, in the most explicit language which it would be possible to employ, that on the day of final audit *every* man will be judged according to the deeds he had done in the body, whether these were good or evil, and that there will be a corresponding difference in the punishment inflicted on the ungodly in a

future state. Some will be beaten with many stripes, and others with comparatively few; according to this phase of the Annihilation scheme, there will not only be no stripes, no degrees of punishment in the world to come, but no punishment whatever; in fact, to them there will be no world to come at all.

I might go on for many pages of this volume advancing one argument after another against this theory of eternal annihilation of soul and body at death, but I will confine myself to one or two more. Will any Destructionist undertake to reconcile his theory with the doom of the rich man in the gospel, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day? I have met with no one hitherto who has imposed on himself that task. I know not whether that rich man was or was not an Annihilationist before his death; but of this I am certain, that he was not after his soul was required of him. "The rich man," we are told, "died, and was buried." What, then? Was his death synonymous with annihilation? According to the Destructionist theory of annihilation at death it ought to have been so. There ought, then, to have been an eternal end of him in relation to both soul and body. But was it so? The words which follow in the twenty-third

verse of the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel of Luke, where the parable is recorded, shall answer the question. “And,” are the awful words—“And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” Was that annihilation? The rich man did not find it so. Nor has any one, before or since his day, who died in his sins, found his doom after death other than that which our Lord here sets before us, in language so solemn, as being the doom of this rich man. A single word of comment would only weaken the force of the argument against annihilation at death, furnished by this passage of Scripture.

There is one other argument which shows the utter groundlessness of the belief that the moment the wicked die, the soul and body are forever annihilated. If it were so, is it not an incomprehensible fact, according to the tendencies of the human mind to reason from analogy, that the fallen angels, when they sinned in heaven and were cast down to the prison in which they still remain, were not annihilated? One wonders on what principle—speaking after the manner of men, but speaking with the most profound reverence—it could, in the moral government of God, be the fact, that wicked men should escape the consequences of their sins with so slight a punishment, if punishment it can be

called, as annihilation, when the revolted angels were precipitated from heaven and cast into hell, there to remain in chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day. Though their punishment be incomparably more severe than that of the ungodly—assuming still, for the sake of argument, that annihilation is a punishment—their sin was of a die less deep than that which those who live under the Gospel dispensation commit. The greatest beyond comparison of all guilt is that of rejecting Christ. That is guilt which the fallen angels never committed. It is a sin with which those who live in a Christian land are alone chargeable. Can it then be that those of our race who reject Christ should escape with annihilation, while fallen angels are doomed to endure the torments of hell throughout, according to the testimony of Scripture, the endless ages of eternity? Not only will the Judge of all the earth do right, but the administration of his moral government, in every department of his boundless empire, will be conducted on the principles of harmony as well as rectitude. If, therefore, fallen angels were not annihilated on their revolt against God, so neither will the ungodly at their death. If the one class were consigned to intolerable sorrow and suffering, so will be the other.

It is possible I may have among my readers

some few, whose minds are not fitted for following a course of consecutive reasoning on this or any other subject. Let me, therefore, furnish such readers with one single argument against the theory of annihilation at death,—so very simple, that a child may understand it, and yet so powerful that no sophistry, no philosophy, no intellectual agencies which may be brought against it, can withstand its force. The argument is this:—The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in contrasting the glory of the New Testament dispensation with that of the Old, says, in the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth verses of the tenth chapter,—“He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” If the despiser of Moses’ law had to endure the punishment of death for his sin, he received, according to this phase of the Annihilationist scheme, the greatest punishment which will be inflicted on any sinner. The man, therefore, can suffer no greater,—because he, too, will be annihilated at death,—who hath trodden under foot the blood of the Son of God,

and hath counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace. But while the Destructionists tell us that, so far as punishment is concerned, there is no difference between the transgressor of the law of Moses and the man who is guilty of treading under foot the Son of God, and counting his blood an unholy thing,—and doing despite to the Spirit of grace, the Scriptures solemnly and emphatically declare, that the latter will be adjudged to be deserving, and will most surely receive a “*much sorer punishment*” than the former. And as we know that this “*much sorer punishment*” is not inflicted in this world, it must be in a future state. This one Scripture passage, therefore, destroys entirely and for ever the Destructionist theory of annihilation at death. The argument, I repeat, is one which the simplest person may comprehend, and with which he may meet and discomfit all the “*armies of the aliens.*”

Let me say, in conclusion, on this phase of the Destructionist question, that the sole reason why I have gone at so much length into that part of it which asserts the entire and eternal extinction of the life both of body and soul at death, is that the notion being so congenial to human nature in its corrupt state, has a great number of adherents in the so-called Christian

world. I am not aware that in this country there is any organized body of persons who have regular meetings for the maintenance and inculcation of these specific views, but there are such organizations in America, and not only so, but there are journals established there for the dissemination of this particular class of Destructionist principles.

But even in this country we have many writers who openly identify themselves with this form of the Destructionist theory. In my next chapter I will name some of these. Suffice it in the meantime to say that there are myriads, probably I might say millions, of our fellow-subjects who are privately adherents of the doctrine that the death of the body is the entire and eternal extinction of both soul and body. It is, as just observed, a notion which is peculiarly congenial to the corrupt nature of the human heart. It is a "flattering unction" to the souls of all who are steeped in sin. It is consequently one of the most powerful weapons in the hands of Satan in the great mission in which he is engaged,—the mission of decoying and destroying souls for ever and ever. I am as firmly persuaded as I am of any truth, that among the various opiates which Satan employs to lull the consciences of men asleep, there is none more

effectual than that of persuading those who live in sin, that there will be to them no punishment hereafter, but that, like the beasts of the field, they will be annihilated when they die, and never more be heard of. And with such a conviction, what else could we logically expect, than that their motto, and their conduct too, should be, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die?" "Let us," in other words, "live as we list. If there is no punishment hereafter, no future life, and consequently no future suffering, what matters it what we do, provided we do not render ourselves amenable to human laws? If our lives are to be short, let them at least be merry."

Most earnestly do I wish that I could prevail on those whom Satan seeks to ruin for ever by whispering in their ear that there will be no future punishments, because there will be no hereafter at all for sinners, to do as our Lord did when He was sorely tempted by the Evil One,—meet him on his own ground. Why should not those thus sought to be poisoned by the devil say to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan," telling him to his face, that if there be no punishment of the wicked hereafter, his vocation as the tormentor must be gone, and that he will have to live in idleness in that bottomless pit into which he is to be cast when time shall be no more.

And in thus speaking of the purpose to which the Evil One turns the doctrine, that death is nothing more nor less than an eternal sleep—a phrase which is convertible with the term “annihilation”—I would bespeak the special and unbiassed attention of those who have fallen into the fearful pit of believing in destruction, or may be in danger of so lamentable a fall—that if Satan himself believed in the annihilation of the wicked at death, he would not put himself to the great and unceasing trouble he does, in seeking to seduce mankind into the paths of sin. And as there are no bounds to his malevolence, so there are no limits to his perseverance in that course of action which he deems most adapted to accomplish the ruin of the race. Now, as we all know that his knowledge is wonderfully great, and that having been one of the angel princes in heaven himself, he cannot be ignorant as to what will be the destiny of those who live and die in their sins, we may be, and are perfectly sure, that if he were a believer in the doctrine of destruction at death, he would not so persistently persevere in his efforts to prevail on those he tempts to plunge into a sea of sin. If the doom of the ungodly were destined to be annihilation, his malice would not be gratified, because he can and does delight in the most extreme torments

to which those can be subjected whom he has made his victims. Nothing short of his knowledge of the fact, that the torments of those whom he has successfully tempted into the most grievous sins, will be at once exquisite and endless, would lead him to make such unwearied and resolute efforts to entangle men and women in his snares. It is the certain knowledge that those whom he succeeds in making his victims will be consigned over to him to be tormented day and night for ever in a future state—just as he himself it is said will be—that constitutes the great stimulus which prompts him unceasingly to resort to all the expedients which the inexhaustible sources of his malignant ingenuity can suggest, to entangle them in his toils.

There is one argument which, if it stood alone, would prove fatal to the doctrine of Annihilation, whether at death, or the judgment, or at some remote period of eternity. I allude to the sentiment which pervades the New Testament from beginning to end, to the effect that the glory and inestimable value of the redemption which Christ has wrought out for those who believe upon Him, is not only a redemption in bringing sinners to heaven, but in saving them from hell. Sinners are no less exhorted to make sure of heaven by repairing to the cross of Christ in the exercise of an appro-

priating faith in Him, than they are exhorted, and even entreated, to flee from the wrath to come. And no one ever employed language to this effect with greater frequency or force than our Lord himself. God the Father, too, employed language to the same effect with a remarkable frequency under the Old Testament dispensation. Some writers, who delight to dwell on the benevolence and mercy of God, to the exclusion of all consideration of his holiness and justice, affirm that God's threatenings or denunciations of his ancient people referred only to his dealings with them in this world. It is marvellous beyond all comprehension how any one acquainted with the Divine dealings with the Jews could ever have come to such a conclusion. "Because," says God, speaking through the medium of Solomon, "because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would have none of my reproof: I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." This, doubtless, primarily applied to God's temporal dealings with his ancient people; but inasmuch as it does not apply in this world to all who set God's authority at defiance, it must be verified in a future state; for every word which He has spoken must be ful-

filled. To annihilate sinners at the time of their death would be no confirmation of these solemn words ; for annihilation would be just the thing which the wicked, if they had their own way, would above all things desire. In that case they would be utterly unconscious of, and unaffected by, the manifestation of the Divine displeasure, no matter what form it might assume. So far from annihilation being the portion of the ungodly, it will be the very thing, as I have before had occasion to remark, for which they will pray to God, though, it may be, they never prayed to Him before. In the day of judgment, there will be a striking verification of the words of the prophet :—“ In those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it ; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.” If it were otherwise—if the wicked were to be annihilated instantaneously at death, or if, in seeking death, they were to find it, then the salvation of the soul, not being a salvation from hell, but simply one to heaven, would be deprived of half its glory, and robbed of half its value.

I have made a brief allusion to another form in which the doctrine of Annihilation, without any previous suffering in any shape or under any circumstances, is presented to us. It is necessary that I should make a few observations on

this phase of the Destructionist theory. It is that the natural death of the ungodly will not be the end of their being, but that they will be raised up again at the last day, contemporaneously with the resurrection of the righteous, and that both classes will have to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive the sentence which shall seal their eternal destiny. While the righteous will hear the blessed words addressed to them by their Saviour-Judge, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," the words of their Judge will fall on the ears of the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." But instead of this sentence being one which will doom the ungodly to dwell with "everlasting burnings," there will, according to the class of persons with whom I am dealing, be no fire, no suffering of body, no sorrow of soul, but utter and eternal unconsciousness. By far the ablest advocate of this Annihilation hypothesis was the late Rev. Mr. Walker, of Trinity College, Dublin, who, while he remained in the Church of England, was—half a century ago—one of the most influential and popular men in it. As, indeed, a theological writer, few men in his day stood higher, either

for learning or ability, than Mr. Walker. But he left the Church of England on various grounds,—his disbelief in the eternity of future punishments, and his adoption of the Annihilation theory, being among the number. The comparatively few members of his congregation who followed him soon dwindled down to a mere handful. Discouraged in Dublin, he came over to London, and commenced the work of the ministry in the then Assembly Rooms in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where his preaching, or, as he preferred the word, "teaching," was attended by only about eighteen or twenty persons. It was very sad to see a man of such varied learning and eminent gifts, thus entirely lost in the great metropolis. And yet we can hardly feel surprised that any one preaching the doctrine of eternal annihilation immediately after the general judgment has ended, should have scarcely any hearers. In Dublin, Mr. Walker left a representative and advocate of his views in favour of annihilation, in the person of Dr. John Hoskyn,—forty years ago a physician of considerable note in that city. Dr. Hoskyn published, in the year 1831, an elaborate pamphlet in favour of Mr. Walker's theory,—that on the close of the general judgment, the entire race of the ungodly will be annihilated. The title of this pamphlet was, "An Exposition of the Scriptural

Statements of the Gospel, and of the Denunciations Uttered against Those who Reject it.”

Speaking not only for himself, but as the representative of Mr. Walker, Dr. Hoskyn develops his Annihilation creed in these terms:—“I assert,” he says, “that the scriptural doctrine of a future state is simply this,—that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. To the just shall be awarded eternal life; to the unjust, death. In conformity with this sentence, I assert that the Scriptures do not teach that the wicked shall *exist* eternally, or *at all*, in fire and torments.”

According to this hypothesis, as must be evident on a moment’s reflection, there can be no suffering whatever, not even to the slightest extent, in any form, or for a single moment, after the sentence has been passed, “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” If the immediate and entire extinction of life, and of the consequent susceptibility of pain, be contemporaneous with the sentence pronounced by the great Judge on the ungodly, where was the point, where the propriety, or even truthfulness of the Saviour’s language, when He said, “prepared for the devil and his angels”? In the supposed case, those who perish in their sins will be for ever beyond

the temptations and torments of Satan and his subordinate confederates.

In what way, let me further ask, could there be in this Annihilation scheme a verification of the Redeemer's words, when He said, in relation to the inhabitants of Chorazin, "Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you"? If the ungodly are to be annihilated the moment the transactions of the judgment are over, then it cannot be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on that solemn occasion than for Chorazin; for, according to this phase of the Annihilation scheme, all will be treated alike,—that is, all will be doomed to eternal annihilation. If this doctrine of Annihilation, immediately after the general judgment, be true, then *all* those portions of Scripture—so numerous as to pervade the whole tenor of the inspired volume—which explicitly and emphatically assert that there will be degrees in the future punishment of the ungodly, must affirm as a fact that which is not so.

Accept this Annihilation scheme, and the doctrine of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures must be given up. But the matter may be fully and finally settled in one word. We are told that in the day of judgment the wicked shall

call to the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Now, according to the class of Annihilationists with whom we are arguing, this prayer of the ungodly is superfluous, for the doom they ask is just the very doom which the Judge has appointed for them. Is it not alike lamentable and marvellous, that men of intelligence and of integrity too—men, moreover, who are intimately conversant with the Scriptures—should come to conclusions such as the one under consideration, which, on the very face of things, is wholly at variance with the mind of the Spirit? How effectually, too, does the passage I have just quoted dispose of the notion entertained by those who affirm that the wicked have a greater dread of annihilation than even of eternal punishments. Instead of dreading annihilation, they desire it, and earnestly implore it at the hands of God. For the first time in their lives the ungodly are now represented as praying, and their prayer is that, as the only means of escaping the eternal wrath they are doomed to endure, the rocks and mountains would, in mercy, fall upon and annihilate them.

Since writing what precedes, I have met with another and somewhat varied representation of

this third of the Annihilationist theories to which I have been adverting,—that which dates the day of the destruction of the ungodly, not either from the day of their death, or from some indefinitely prolonged period in eternity, after they have endured intolerable torments, but from the day of judgment. Acknowledging the truth of the great fact, that there will be a grand assize at the end of the world, in which the prominent figures will be the righteous and the wicked, standing in solemn array before their Judge, and conscious that that momentous fact proves, as I have shown in a previous chapter, that the ungodly cannot be destroyed body and soul at death,—the believers in this theory say, like Mr. Walker and Dr. Hoskyn, that the period of the annihilation of the wicked will be immediately after the general judgment. The latest advocate of this Annihilationist view is the Rev. Mr. Reynoldson, now in his eightieth year. In order that I may not render myself amenable to the charge of making mistaken representations of this phase of Annihilation, which might otherwise be preferred against me, I will quote Mr. Reynoldson's own words. The conclusion of his book on the subject is as follows:—"My own conviction is, that when the Son of God shall have finished all the work which the Father gave

Him to do, He will have made an utter end of sin and its bitter effects ; that He will have completely destroyed both the devil and all his works ; that, when the Lord of Glory shall utter the momentous words, ‘ It is done ; I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End,’ there will be but one region of immortality, the blessed inhabitants of which will live in a state of joy unspeakable and full of glory, for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. This is my conviction, and it incites me more and more to love God in Christ and Christ in God, and to love his appearing. It heightens, too, beyond expression, my sense of the blissful prospect beyond the grave which I expect so soon to enter.”

Very probably, though I am unacquainted with them, there may be a considerable number of persons who share the views of Mr. Reynoldson. He evidently feels the force of the objections which I have urged against the theory of Annihilation at death in previous pages, grounded on the fulness of the proof which is furnished in the Scriptures, that there will be a resurrection and a judgment of all mankind,—of the wicked equally with the righteous. I pause not here to expose the errors of Mr. Reynoldson’s Annihilation hypothesis. That I will do

by implication when I come to deal with the other Annihilation theory, which defers the extinction of bodily and spiritual life until the ungodly have endured an indefinite period of torments inconceivably great in hell. In the meantime, it is due to Mr. Reynoldson to say that he conducts the discussion in a calm, Christian spirit, which, I regret to say, is not displayed by other Annihilationists, to whose views and writings I am called upon to advert in this volume. The infirmities incident to advanced years have compelled Mr. Reynoldson to relinquish the pastoral charge which he so long held over the Congregational Church at Wisbech. Let us hope that retirement into the bosom of his family, with the solemn reflections which are natural in the case of a minister of the Gospel who feels that he stands on the very verge of the grave, may have the effect of even yet bringing him back to the views on this subject which he believed and preached when he began his ministry nearly sixty years ago.

THE DOCTRINE OF ANNIHILATION.

PART FIFTH.

I COME now to the consideration of the other aspect of the Annihilation question, namely, that after a prolonged period of intense sufferings, too great for the human mind to conceive, all who die with their sins unrepented of and unpardoned, will be eternally annihilated. How long that period will be is a point on which the advocates of this Destructionist view are at variance among themselves. Some of them think it will be so very prolonged, that the powers of arithmetic are altogether inadequate to grasp its duration. Others are of opinion that, though the period of punishment will be a lengthened one, yet that it will not be for an indefinite term of years. It may be that some myriads of years will suffice to meet the views of God as to the measure of torments, in relation to their duration, to which those who died in their ungodly state will be

subjected. But this class of Destructionists all concur in admitting that they have no scriptural data for their opinions. All is confessedly conjectural as to the period during which the wicked will be tormented before being annihilated.

It is often difficult to decide to which of the two classes of Destructionists particular writers in favour of Annihilation belong. I have mentioned the names of the leading persons who wrote in favour of the Destructionist theory about the middle of the last century, without being able to say in which of the categories they ought to be placed. I am under the necessity of saying the same in relation to most of those who have lately come forward, in the capacity of authors, as champions in behalf of Annihilation. Among the more modern works on the subject may be mentioned the following, with the names of the authors:—

“Eternal Punishment and Eternal Death.” An Essay, by James William Barlow, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Dublin.—

“The Popular Ideas of Immortality, Everlasting Punishment, and the State of Separate Souls, brought to the Test of Scripture,” by the Rev. William Ker, M.A., Incumbent of Tipton.—“Life or Death, the Destiny of the Soul in the Future State,” by Edward Falconer Litton, M.A.,

Barrister-at-Law.—“Endless Suffering not the Doctrine of Scripture,” by Thomas Davis, M.A., Incumbent of Roundhey, Yorkshire.—“Everlasting Punishment not Everlasting Pain,” by Robert Reynoldson.—“Death in Adam, Life in Christ,” by C. S. Skinner.—“The Glory of Christ in the Creation and Reconciliation of All Things: With Special Reference to the Doctrine of Eternal Evil,” by the Rev. Samuel Minton.—“A Letter to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, on that Portion of his recent Pastoral Letter which affirms ‘The Everlasting Suffering of the Lost,’” by the Rev. H. H. Dobney, Maidstone.—“The Duration and Nature of Future Punishment,” by the Rev. Henry Constable, A.M., Prebendary of Cork.

In America, the advocates of the annihilation of the wicked, at some indefinite period in the world to come, are much more numerous, so far at least as regards the avowal of their principles, than in Great Britain. But, even there, few of their congregations can boast either of wealth, or intelligence, or position in religious society. They have, it is true, as I have before stated, some journalistic organs of their views, but these are inadequately supported. The only one with whose name I am acquainted appears under the title of “The Voice of the West,” but has no

circulation worthy of the name. It has to struggle hard for an existence, and could not exist at all but for the free-will offerings of those Destructionists whose means enable them to contribute liberally to the support of a journal which zealously advocates their views. The doctrine of eternal Annihilation is at best but a cold, cheerless, and repelling creed. It neither solaces the soul nor rejoices the heart. Hence we cannot wonder that "The Voice of the West" is so poorly supported.

It is not generally known, but such is the fact, that this class of Destructionists claim at least one recent dignitary of the Church of England as having belonged to their party. The Church dignitary to whom I allude was the late Dr. Hampden, the Bishop of Hereford. I was aware, many years ago, that that prelate—a man, it is right to state, of great learning—was what some would call unlimited in the liberality of his religious beliefs. Those of the "Essayist and Review" school of theology have always claimed him as their own, and been proud of the general identity of his opinions with theirs; but I was not aware until recently that he was to be classed among the Annihilationists. I would have placed him in the category rather of the Universalists,—those who believe in the ultimate moral regene-

ration, and consequent salvation, of all mankind. But it is confidently affirmed, in the publications of some of our leading Annihilationists, that he held the doctrine of Annihilation, though he may not have used the precise Destructionist phraseology. The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul has been shown by that prelate not to be, according to the parties I refer to, in the Bible. One of them, after thus claiming the Bishop of Hereford as sharing their views, proceeds to express his own firm persuasion of the truth of the natural mortality of the soul in the following language:—"With the most earnest desire to provoke no needless controversy, and with all respect for those who think differently, I feel bound to profess my own assured belief that the common notion that man's soul is necessarily immortal and eternal is an error; that the soul can perish or die; and that after the day of judgment, and the execution of its sentences of suffering, every wicked man's soul *will* perish and die, so that only good men will eventually 'live for ever.'" If this was the opinion of the Bishop of Hereford, then he was as much an Annihilationist as the writer himself, who glories in being one.

The task of dealing with this phase of the Destructionists theory, will not be one of much

difficulty. Rather let me say there will be no difficulty in it at all. A few words will suffice to answer both the bishop and the author referred to, and these words will be none other than those of our Lord himself—"Fear not," said He, on an occasion to which I have already made a reference, "them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." I could not conceive of any clearer intimation than is here given, that the souls of the wicked, as well as those of the righteous, will be immortal, unless destroyed by God himself, which there is no Scripture to show ever will be the case. If the souls of the ungodly were destined inevitably to die, it would matter little to them whether they were killed by violence or annihilated in the course of nature. Then again, our Lord says of the ungodly in a future state, that "their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched." Could language be more explicit or more conclusive in the assertion of the immortality of the souls of the wicked than that which our Lord here employs? It is "*their* worm that dieth not," and, therefore, their souls can never die.

The standard argument with this class of Annihilationists is, the language of our Lord in the parable of the servant who did not do his lord's

will, although he knew it. What Christ said respecting this unfaithful servant was, that he would be beaten with many stripes: whereas he who did not know his lord's will, and, therefore, neglected it in ignorance, would be beaten with few stripes.

Now, I maintain that this passage does not give the slightest sanction to the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked at any period, no matter how far distant, in a future state. It refers solely to the degree, not to the duration, of punishments in the world to come. It proves, what, as I have before stated, I fully believe,—that as in heaven there will be degrees of happiness, so in hell there will be degrees of misery, but nothing more. It is, indeed, to me surprising that any man could find here an argument in favour of Annihilation, after a lengthened duration of torments in a future state. The passage gives no countenance whatever to the belief that, though some will receive in a future world many stripes, and others comparatively few, the stripes will, in either case, ever cease to be given. The fact is to me so clear, that no intimation whatever is here to be found of a termination to the torments of those who are to be visited with stripes—no matter whether many or few—that I cannot enter into any lengthened

argument upon it, any more than I would enter into a course of argument with the man who would gravely lay down the proposition, and endeavour to establish it, that two and two do not make four.

The other arguments in favour of their views, are to be found in the Scriptures, which, as alleged by the class of Destructionists with whom I am now dealing, are those which I have already examined in my answers to those Destructionists who believe in the annihilation of the ungodly at the time of their death. The words, when applied to the wicked dying in their sins, “destroy,” “destroyed,” and “destruction,” employed by the latter, are equally employed by those who postpone the time of annihilation for an indefinite period,—it may be for millions of years, during which they are to be the subjects of torments too terrible for the mind to conceive. To this latter point I shall have occasion to recur when I come to consider the views of another class of religionists, namely, the Universalists.

The principal plea advanced by those Destructionists who believe in the annihilation of the ungodly after an indefinitely prolonged period of intolerable sufferings is, that such annihilation is more accordant with our ideas of the bene-

volence of God than the creed which makes future punishments eternal. But those who entertain this notion seem to forget that benevolence is not the only attribute which God possesses. He has other perfections as well; and his benevolence or mercy must not be established on the ruins of his holiness and justice. If God is "Love," it must not be forgotten that He is also "a consuming fire" to the workers of iniquity. If we read of the compassion of God, we no less read of "the wrath of God." And no one attribute of the Divine character must be so magnified as to ignore or eclipse his other perfections. The sentiment so beautifully expressed by Dr. Young in his "Night Thoughts," and so often quoted, that "A God all mercy is a God unjust," is thoroughly scriptural; and, therefore, if it be just and right on the part of God that there should be no end to the sufferings of those who perish in their sins, God's administration of his moral government hereafter as well as here, demands that the punishment of the wicked in a future state of being should be in consonance with what is right. And that view of the matter presses with an irresistible force on my mind as being wholly incompatible with the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked at any time, no matter how remote the

time may be, in the eternal future. All sin is, objectively considered, infinite in its enormity, and therefore calls for an infinite punishment; and no punishment can be infinite which is not eternal in its duration, inasmuch as no creature could bear a punishment infinite in degree. In that one great fact I see an unanswerable argument in favour of never-ending punishments.

But this phase of the Destructionist question may be regarded in another light, and yet with the same result, so far as concerns the doctrine of Annihilation, after a period, more or less prolonged, of the most frightful punishment in the abodes of perdition. I see at least the semblance of reason, though none in reality, for the Universalist theory of the ultimate rescue of the wicked from the grasp of Satan, and their restoration to the favour and love of God, and consequent everlasting happiness in heaven. No matter how prolonged and how intense the sufferings of the ungodly, yet still they would be, when viewed in the light of eternity, less in degree than atoms are in size as compared with our world. But here, according to those who hold Destructionists sentiments, we are to have an indefinitely prolonged period of mental anguish and bodily agony, to terminate in absolute and eternal annihilation. I must own, and I thus

publicly proclaim the fact, that to my mind there is something positively appalling, something from which my very nature revolts, as altogether unworthy the Great Supreme, whose name and nature are love, in the idea that He would torture, by the most terrible modes of punishment, his creatures through unnumbered ages, and then put an end to their agonies, not by restoration, but by annihilation. I cannot,—I say it in the most emphatic terms,—bring myself to believe in this doctrine. The doctrine of universal restoration is, as I have just said, at least intelligible, but this is not. It seems to me to be entirely at variance with all our ideas of God, not only as these are derived from Scripture, but no less with those which we are apt to form from the exercise of our reasoning faculties. This phase of the Annihilationist scheme appears to me to do the greatest dishonour to God. It is in effect charging Him with being actuated by a spirit of revenge,—of which we know Him to be incapable. It is representing Him to be a vindictive Being, in thus torturing gratuitously for unnumbered ages in a future state a large body—some think the majority—of his creatures. It holds up to us the Divine Being as luxuriating in the frightful misery of millions of those whom He called into existence, without its being neces-

sary that He should do so ; whereas the doctrine of eternal punishment is based on the belief that nothing less will satisfy the demands of Divine justice. As therefore I hold this to be an absolute moral impossibility on the part of God, I turn away with holy abhorrence from an idea so awfully dishonouring to Him. If I must embrace some other view on this question than that of the eternal punishment of the ungodly, give me either universal restoration, or annihilation contemporaneously with bodily death ; but do not ask me to accept the appalling doctrine—for such it is in effect—that God delights in the gratuitous agonies of his creatures ; or, that, with the view of indulging a feeling so unworthy of his name and nature, He will subject countless millions of mankind to a very prolonged period, many millions of years it may be, of inconceivably extreme mental sorrow and physical suffering, then to be annihilated,—to become, in fact, no better than the beasts that perish. I say again, that from such an idea my very soul turns away with a measure of abhorrence which no language I could employ would be adequate to express. It has not even the merit of being intended as a course of discipline to recommend it. The Universalist theory of the ultimate restoration of all men has, at least, that recommendation. In the case of

eternal punishment, I shall show in another chapter, that if it is an appalling belief, it has this to be said in its favour—that such punishment is only inflicted because the inexorable demands of justice can accept no less. Suffice it in the meantime to say that the annihilation of all the wicked, after enduring agonies in a future state too great for the mind to picture to itself, and that for a period which may stretch for countless millions of years into the coming eternity, equally involves the destruction of Satan and all his fallen angels. That all the wicked, including devils as well as mankind, are to be destroyed, is indeed the great essential doctrine in this creed. But I do not now enter on any proofs of the utter groundlessness of this part of the Destructionist theory. It also will fall under our consideration when I come to deal with the question of eternal punishment.

In connection with the doctrine of Annihilation, I ought to advert to a fact which seems to me extraordinary. I allude to the circumstance—one which I doubt not has struck the minds as strange, of all who are conversant with the subject, that there are no parties who are more opposed to the doctrine of universal restoration than the advocates of the Destructionist creed. For myself, instead of arguing against

what does not admit of argument, I would simply and emphatically repeat what I have just said,—that if the alternative were placed before me of choosing whether I shall embrace the doctrine of universal ultimate restoration, or that of Annihilation, after an indefinite period of intolerable torments in hell,—I would, though recoiling at the necessity of accepting either view, unhesitatingly prefer the former. If the Universalist doctrine be true, the words which Dante has, in his marvellous poem, “The Inferno,” represented as being inscribed on the portals which lead to the place of eternal perdition, “All hope abandon, ye who enter here,”—cannot have the element of truth in them. There would, according to Universalism, be not only the hope, but the certainty of ultimate salvation, however prolonged might be the period at which the sufferers were to be delivered from their dismal doom, and be received into eternal glory and bliss in heaven. And that eternal redemption would constitute more than a compensation for all the miseries they had endured, even should their misery have been prolonged for millions of ages more than the powers of arithmetic would be capable of computing.

All the advocates of ultimate annihilation represent that doctrine as the only one which

will ever insure a full attendance at our churches and chapels ; and that the inculcation of the doctrine of eternal punishment invariably and inevitably thins those places of worship, in so far as relates to the working classes, in which the latter doctrine is preached. A contemporary Annihilationist represents the industrial classes as saying that they stay away from our churches and chapels solely because the doctrine of eternal punishment is preached in them. And he so puts the case as to leave the impression that he endorses the accuracy of the representation. Well, then, let us inquire how far, if at all, he and those who share his views are correct. The matter admits of being put to the proof. Listen then, to the logic of fact ; for there is no logic like the logic of fact. Is it really the case that those places of worship in which the doctrine of eternal punishment is preached are comparatively deserted ? Are they so thinly attended that hearers are only to be seen scattered here and there ? On the contrary, these are just the churches and chapels which, of all others, are most largely attended. The doctrine of eternal punishment is traditionally associated with what is called Evangelical preaching. In no other than Evangelical pulpits, indeed, is that doctrine ever inculcated. And yet, I repeat, these Evangelical

places of worship, so far from being characterized by a meagre attendance, are those in which are to be seen the greatest congregations. Who, for instance, preaches the doctrine of eternal punishment more frequently or more forcibly than Mr. Spurgeon? Yet, who has a larger congregation than he? Who, rather let me ask, has so large a congregation? I am quite aware of how much Mr. Spurgeon's great talents contribute to the magnitude of his congregation; but I affirm, with all confidence in the accuracy of my belief, that were he to preach as often the non-eternity of punishments in the world to come, as he does their eternity, he would, notwithstanding his brilliant pulpit talents, soon find his congregation falling fast away.

Who, on the other hand, have notoriously the smallest of all the congregations, no matter to what denomination they belong? There can be but one answer to the question. Is it not manifestly those clergymen in the Church of England, or those ministers in Evangelical denominations who disbelieve in, and consequently do not preach, the doctrine of eternal punishment? This must be known to all who have ever paid any attention to the subject. My observation in connection with these matters is of a somewhat extensive

kind, and I advisedly say that though there may be some instances, they are comparatively very few, in which the non-eternity of future punishment is dogmatically preached, without its being allied with the denial of the doctrines of original sin, of the Trinity, of the perfect deity of Christ, the Atonement, and the personality and work of the Holy Spirit. Well, then, the question recurs, and demands an answer—Are the places in which these doctrines are preached crowded with hearers? The answer must be in the negative. Those places of worship, whether they be connected with the Church of England, or belong to Dissenters, in which what the Destructionists would call the dogma of eternal punishment is systematically inculcated, are incomparably better attended—by the working classes as well as by the other classes of the community—than those places in which the denial of the eternity of future punishment, and of the other doctrines I have named, are uniformly taught. How unfortunate, then, because so manifestly at variance with the fact, the assertion that the masses are prevented from attending our churches and chapels because the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment is preached in them. Nor do I see, constituted as human nature is, that it could be otherwise. If men believe in the eternal dura-

tion of future punishment, it is natural—indeed it would be an inevitable result—that they should be more anxious to escape so dreadful a doom than would be those who have embraced the notion of annihilation after a certain period of suffering in hell; or the Universalist doctrine, of which I shall have to speak in my next chapter, that, after a certain period of suffering, the entire human race will be restored to the image of God, which they had lost, and be received into heaven.

There is one work in favour of Annihilation, after the wicked being kept an indefinite period in torments in a future state, to which I had no intention of referring. Special reasons for this are known to the author. The work alluded to is entitled “Life in Christ,” by the Rev. Edward White. I am induced to make a passing allusion to this volume, contrary to my original intention, owing to an accidental circumstance which has just occurred while these sheets are going through the press, and which invests that book with an adventitious and temporary interest. The Rev. Samuel Minton, an able clergyman of the Church of England, whose incumbency is in Eaton Square, London, and with whom I have for many years been personally acquainted, has just brought out a work in which he earnestly advocates the doctrine of the annihilation of the

wicked after suffering the torments of hell for an indefinitely prolonged period. In the preface to this work, entitled "The Glory of Christ in the Creation and Reconciliation of all Things," he says:—"To Mr. White's book I am indebted for the first gleam of light that I ever received upon this subject,"—namely, the annihilation of both soul and body after an indefinite period of suffering inconceivably great in the realms of perdition. After this remark by Mr. Minton, I feel it a duty incumbent on me to rescind—just for a moment and no more—the resolution I had formed not to mention the name of Mr. White, nor his work. From the words of Mr. Minton, which I have just quoted, the natural inference would be that he regarded Mr. White's book as one which is triumphantly conclusive in favour of that form of the Annihilation theory which consists in the conviction that after a period—possibly millions of years—of agonies in hell the most intense which human nature is capable of enduring,—those who live and die in their sins will be annihilated. I know not how Mr. White may regard the fact, but Mr. Minton goes far to neutralize the opinion he before expressed of the value of Mr. White's volume, when he endorses what had been said in relation to it by the Rev. T. Davis in his work, "Endless Sufferings not the

Doctrine of Scripture.” Mr. Davis says, and Mr. Minton echoes his words, “The volume was written in early life, and he (Mr. White) would *probably modify much of its argumentation now.*” In what light Mr. White will consider this opinion, first expressed by the Rev. Mr. Davis, and now endorsed by the Rev. Samuel Minton, it is not for me to decide. Neither am I in a position to say to what portions of Mr. White’s volume these two gentlemen refer as advocating opinions which they repudiate. If I were to indulge in a conjecture—and it is only conjecture—on the subject, it would be that the part of Mr. White’s Annihilation creed to which they take exception, and from which they dissent, is that in which the author of “Life in Christ” strenuously contends that the punishment of the ungodly in hell before they are annihilated, will, partly at least, arise from the fact that those expressions are to be understood literally with which we are so familiar,—“Unquenchable fire,” “the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone,” “the worm that dieth not,” “the fire that is not quenched,” “weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.” For the literal interpretation of these and other phrases which point to material agencies in hell, Mr. White, in the volume in question, contends with as much earnestness, and, let me add, with as much ability,

as he does for the doctrine of the destruction of both soul and body in hell, after the lapse of, it may be, millions of ages. I refer to these circumstances for the purpose of asking Mr. Minton whether he does not himself see that his endorsation of the opinion of the Rev. T. Davis relative to the soundness of Mr. White's Annihilation views, is of comparatively little value. As both Mr. Davis and Mr. Minton plainly intimate, that Mr. White having written his book "in early life," he would "probably modify much of his argumentation now,"—a phraseology which seems to imply that Mr. White is conscious that there are errors in his former views on the subject of future punishment—let us hope, and we are justified in hoping, that as he advances in life, he may yet see and renounce the remaining errors contained in his book.

With regard to the change which has taken place in Mr. Minton's opinions on the subject of future punishments, none can more deeply deplore it than myself. I thought I had known his principal doctrinal views, as well as himself personally, for many years, and certainly I never had the slightest idea that he was likely to plunge headlong into this gulf of awful error. Yet so it unhappily is. I wish much, and I should have expected of Mr. Minton, that having

experienced an entire change of opinion on a question which may most justly be said to be one of infinite importance, he would have spoken with all kindness of those who cannot see as he does on the question of future punishments. But I am sorry to say such is not the case. He makes no allowance for those who still adhere to the views on this subject which they, in common with himself, solemnly declared they entertained at the time of their ordination. I must confess that I have read with great grief mingled with pain the following language which constitutes the opening observations of his preface. Speaking of the "Eternity of evil"—which is another mode of phraseology for eternal punishment—which Mr. Minton uses, he thus expresses himself:—"The wide-spread belief in the eternity of evil, is perhaps the most astounding phenomenon that has ever appeared in the history of the human mind. The marvel that intelligent moral creatures could ever be brought to believe it on any evidence whatever, is only equalled by the marvel that those who believe the Bible could so violently pervert the whole tone and tenor of its teaching. There is nothing at all to be compared to it, except the belief in Transubstantiation. No human ingenuity could invent a more absolute physical impossibility than the one, or a

more absolute moral impossibility than the other. But there is this great difference between them: that the one only insults and degrades the human understanding—the other casts a fearful aspersion upon the moral character of God. And though it is no more possible to degrade man's intellect than to degrade his body, without demoralizing him, yet the theory of Transubstantiation does not so directly blaspheme the Majesty of Heaven as the theory of eternal evil. The one charges God with performing a stupendous piece of jugglery, the other accuses Him of infinite cruelty. But why use such strong language? Because nothing less will open men's eyes to see what a monstrous doctrine they are at least professing to hold."

Mr. Minton is right. This is strong language, and is all the more lamentable because of the spirit it displays. It would be bad enough coming from one who had never entertained other opinions, but there is something inexpressibly sad, and painful as well as sad, in the thought that language like this should proceed from the pen of one who at his ordination solemnly declared that he not only believed the very doctrine which he here repudiates and denounces; but regarded it as one of "*nine vital doctrines*," and which up till the present time his

private friends, myself among the number, felt fully assured he still most surely believed. When he came some fourteen or fifteen years ago from Liverpool to London, a most intimate personal friend of his and mine, wrote to me in terms of the highest praise of Mr. Minton,—which I am sure he would not have done, had he for a moment imagined that he entertained the views which he now publicly avows on the subject of future punishments. Who could have expected that one who once believed as firmly as Minton did in the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment—or, to employ the phraseology which he prefers, “the eternity of evil,”—could, now that he has changed his opinions, write in such terms as these?—“That believers in the gospel of the grace of God, some of the closest followers in the world of the Apostle Paul, should hug this delusion to their breasts, and regard it as such an essential part of their system, as to call the denial of it heresy, if not infidelity, is surely passing strange.”

The whole of Mr. Minton's book is pervaded by the expression, in every variety of form, of his feeling of perfect amazement that any one could ever have brought himself to believe in the endless duration of future punishments. And blended with this surprise, there is something

which looks very like a lurking feeling of contempt for those “Evangelicals,” as he half sneeringly terms them, who still believe in the eternity of future punishments. The question which, under these circumstances, naturally suggests itself is this—If the doctrine of the annihilation of the ungodly be so obviously the doctrine of the Bible, how did it happen that he did not, until now, make the discovery? He has been preaching, as a clergyman of the Church of England, for upwards of a quarter of a century, and, during all that time, none belonging to his congregations, either in Liverpool or in London, ever suspected that, to use his own words, he was the victim of “this hideous dream!”

He must have all that time either believed in the doctrine of the endless duration of punishment in the world to come, or he must have been guilty of the serious sin of concealing from his people his opposite views on the subject. In the latter case he has shrunk from expressing and denouncing what he now regards as a God-dishonouring error, and one most terrible in its effects on the souls of mankind. By his own virtual admission he has been guilty of the awful sin of failing to declare what he regarded as a part of “the whole counsel of God.” And yet, with a strange inconsistency, Mr. Minton has no allow-

ances to make for those who, fully satisfied that the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment is not true, do not come boldly forward and avow their convictions. Mr. Minton says, that seeing "how utterly unscriptural that doctrine is, and what incalculable injury it is doing to the cause of Christ, no personal considerations can make me hesitate for a moment to speak what I believe." If I were to judge from a private note which I had from Mr. Minton a few weeks before the publication of his book, I should say that his rejection of the doctrine of eternal punishment, and his adoption of the theory of ultimate annihilation, were events which occurred fully twenty years ago. Yet all the intervening period he has been entirely silent on the subject—so completely so that neither his congregation nor his private friends ever for a moment imagined that his views had undergone any change. Will Mr. Minton himself undertake to reconcile this course

of conduct with the principles of honesty, and of fidelity to the cause of truth? Surely we have at least a right to expect that he should not write, as he does, in language so condemnatory of those to whom he alludes as sharing his recently avowed views, but not having the courage and fidelity to the cause of truth, to openly avow their convictions. If Mr. Minton's answer to this should be,

that though he had doubts and misgivings on the subject, yet that he had not fully made up his mind to adopt his present views, then he is bound by every consideration of duty, and of right feeling and justice, to abstain from loading with his condemnation those who cannot at once discern those truths, according to his present belief, which it took himself upwards of twenty years to apprehend with a sufficient clearness to justify him in openly avowing them.

It is manifestly most unreasonable—nothing, indeed, could be more so—in Mr. Minton to expect that others should see at a glance views which it took himself nearly a quarter of a century to apprehend with sufficient clearness to justify his open avowal of them. So far, however, from Mr. Minton showing charity to, or making any allowance for, those who still believe in the eternity of future punishment, he speaks of them all through his volume in the most uncharitable manner. All I shall say on this point is, that it were well for Mr. Minton to remember that he was, according to his own admissions, in the same condemnation, as they say, for a long period, even for more than twenty years. As he seems for the moment to forget that he himself was subject for nearly a quarter of a century to the terrible condemnation which he pronounces on others for believing in

the eternity of evil, it may be well to remind him, however unpalatable the recollection may be, that he was, in this respect, in precisely the same category as those of whom he says, that the fact of their believing in the doctrine of eternal punishment on any evidence whatever, "was the most astounding phenomenon that has ever appeared in the history of the human mind." Mr. Minton cannot have well weighed all that is logically included in this most rash and uncharitable language. If the doctrine in question is *not to be believed on any evidence whatever*, then Mr. Minton would not believe it on the express declaration of God himself, even if audibly uttered by Him, as when He delivered the law on Mount Sinai, or as when He proclaimed, in an audible voice from heaven, in relation to our Lord, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Not long ago, I met with several ladies and gentlemen, moving in a higher social sphere than myself; and, the subject of eternal punishments being incidentally introduced, one of those present employed language not unlike that of Mr. Minton in the expression of his indignant abhorrence of the idea that there could be such a thing as eternal punishment. "I would not," were the exact words which the party alluded to

employed, "I would not believe in eternal punishments, were an angel from heaven to descend at this moment, and solemnly declare that such is the fact." A clergyman not unknown to Mr. Minton, of position in the Church of England, was present, and manifestly concurred in the "astounding" declaration, that not even the testimony of an angel, sent expressly from heaven to give it, to the doctrine of endless future suffering, would command concurrence on the part of my interlocutor in the truth of the doctrine. Whether, if God *himself* had spoken with an audible voice from heaven in attestation of the eternity of future punishments, the friends whom I met on the occasion referred to, would have refused to receive His testimony, I am not in a position to say. But it is placed beyond all question that Mr. Minton, who for very many years believed in the doctrine of the endlessness of the wicked's misery in the world to come, would not believe in that doctrine now, even were God himself to proclaim its truthfulness in an audible voice from heaven; for he broadly declares it to be "the most astounding phenomenon that has ever appeared in the history of the human mind, that any intelligent, moral creature could ever be brought to believe it on any evidence whatever." I said to my inter-

locutor, on the occasion to which I have referred, "that, of course, if not even the testimony of an angel sent direct from heaven to attest in audible words the truth of the endless duration of future punishment, would be credited, it would be of no use to carry on the conversation on the subject any further. In like manner I may say, in relation to Mr. Minton, that as *no evidence whatever* could persuade him of the truth of this particular doctrine, it were wasting words to argue with him on the question. But there are happily others who, though they may more or less share his Annihilationist notions, are yet not equally inaccessible to the voice of facts and arguments.

Whatever opinions may be entertained in relation to the duration of future punishments, all must admit that the question as to whether they will be limited or endless, is one of the very greatest solemnity. Mr. Minton, in parts of his volume, confesses that he concurs in this view. But—I say it with regret—he neutralizes the admission by declaring that some of his most pointed passages are "written in a spirit of *simple irony*." All I shall say in relation to this is, that I should have thought that there is no question in the illimitable universe of God, less legitimately one for "irony," "simple" or otherwise, than that of the eternity or non-eternity of punishment in the world to come. Mr. Minton

is very unfortunate in his irony when he is constrained to confess that his congregation mistook it for being as serious as the subject is solemn. He puts these questions:—"Why do not those who believe in the eternity of punishment in the world to come, go mad at the sight of such multitudes rushing into endless woe? Or, if faith has such enormous power as to have saved them from that, why do they not put on sackcloth and ashes, cover their faces, and wail with a bitter lamentation! Why do they not rush frantically about the streets, stop every one they meet, and, with horror and dismay depicted on their countenances, warn them of the unutterable woe that lies before them?" These are solemn words, and were so regarded by those to whom they were addressed. No doubt, while they were ringing in the ears of Mr. Minton's hearers, the question must have risen in their minds, "Why did not he himself feel and act thus during the many years that he believed and preached the doctrine of endless misery in the world to come?" But the publication of Mr. Minton's volume proves that there was no ground for the question. The question would have arisen from a mistake into which they had fallen while listening to the delivery of the sermon, in which, as published, he now deliberately records the fact, that all the while he was only indulging in "simple irony."

To me there is something overpoweringly awful in the idea of thus treating a subject so inconceivably solemn—so momentous in its nature and consequences, that the human mind is paralyzed in its efforts to grasp even a small portion of all that is involved in it. It might have been expected that the fact that Mr. Minton having so long entertained and taught a doctrine which he now regards as casting “a fearful aspersion upon the moral character of God,” as “accusing God of infinite cruelty,” as “a *monstrous* doctrine,” as “a monstrous excrescence,” which ought “to be cut away from the Divine revelation on which Satan has contrived to fasten it,” as “a hideous dream,”—it might, I say, have been expected that the fact of having so long believed and preached such a doctrine, would, instead of putting him into a mood for indulging in irony, have laid him in the lowest dust, and plunged his soul into a sea of sorrow, that he should ever have been, even for an hour, a believer in and teacher of an error which he now holds to be the most dishonouring to God and the most destructive to souls, which Satan had ever succeeded in making man embrace. But, no. So far from it, he not only betrays no evidence of sorrow, in the retrospect of the past, but assails, without any qualification whatever, all who hold the doctrine which he himself so

long held—and to which he deliberately, on his ordination, attached his signature as one of the *fundamental* articles of the Christian faith. This is truly sad. Others will deeply grieve for Mr. Minton, if he sorrows not for himself.

With regard to Mr. Minton's argument in favour of the annihilation of the ungodly, after they have gone through a course of intense agonies, prolonged for an indefinite period, or, to use his own language, "for ages of ages," it is not necessary that I should formally reply to them. I have done that already by anticipation, in answering the arguments of other Annihilationists. He has enunciated his new views with great clearness, and with much ability, but I do not see that he has advanced any one argument in favour of his sentiments on the subject, which is at the same time new and sufficiently important to call for a specific reply.

But there are various expressions in Mr. Minton's work which it were inexpedient to let pass without inviting attention to them, because they can be conclusively proved to be either at variance with scriptural statements of the most explicit kind, or with the genius of the Christian system, or with both.

For myself, I cannot—to advert to one such specimen of this nature—refrain from the expression alike of my surprise and sorrow, that the

following language should have proceeded from Mr. Minton's pen. Speaking of the doctrine of eternal suffering, he says:—"The mine seems ready to burst, and perhaps the only thing needed is to let it be seen that this monstrous excrescence can be cut away from the Divine revelation, on which Satan has contrived to fasten it, without touching its foundations."

First of all, Mr. Minton here proposes, if I rightly understand him, either that there should be an excision of those portions of Scripture which have been generally understood to teach the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment, or that the obvious meaning of the passages in question should be so explained away, as to be made to teach another doctrine. Either of these modes of dealing with the portions of Scripture in question, would have the same result. To explain away those passages, so as that they should no longer convey the same meaning, would be a practical expunging of them from the Word of God. The authorship of the doctrine of eternal punishment is ascribed by Mr. Minton, in the quotation we have made, to Satan. First of all, let us express our surprise that, as the Bible, in its other parts, is admitted by Mr. Minton to be the Word of God, He should ever have permitted Satan to

“fasten this horrible doctrine,” as he elsewhere characterizes it, in that Book which constitutes a revelation of the Divine mind and will. Mr. Minton does not touch on that point, and he wisely abstains from attempting to explain that which admits of no explanation. Our Lord has said in another place, “If Satan be divided against himself how then can his kingdom stand?” If the doctrine of the non-eternity of punishment in the world to come were one of Satan’s devices, he is not the cunning or the wily person that he is generally considered to be. I could conceive of no doctrine, except that of annihilation at death or judgment, more calculated to defeat his malevolent purposes respecting the ruin of our race, than that of the limited duration of the punishment which will be inflicted on the ungodly in a future state. Nothing could be better adapted to operate as a lullaby to send sinners into a state of profound sleep, or to act as an opiate to quiet their consciences when, stung with a sense of sin, they dread the punishment which their guilt, if they die unforgiven, will bring upon them in the world to come. If men could only be brought to believe that there will be a termination to their misery in a future state, no matter at how remote a period, they would find at least some measure of

satisfaction in the belief. It is the absorbing and abiding thought that there will be no end to their intolerable sufferings hereafter, which fills the minds of sinners with an overwhelming terror, and which, when operated on in the midst of their awful alarms, by the Holy Spirit, constrains them to cry out, "What must we do to be saved?" and compels them to flee by faith to Christ for salvation.

Mr. Minton's logic is often as demonstratively defective as his theology is unscriptural. He attaches great importance to the exposition which he gives of the well-known passage in which the expression, "The worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched," occurs. "So far," he says, "from there being anything in it, even to suggest the idea of endless suffering, we must do the utmost violence to both figures, in order to force it upon them. Not to mention the somewhat impracticable notion of eternal fire, and an eternal worm, we have to imagine a living human body so constructed that fire will go on for ever scorching, but never consuming it : and also a dead body which will for ever supply food to a worm that unceasingly prays upon it—which will, in fact, possess more astounding vitality than any living body that was ever known." No argumentation is needed to dispose of this. The

answer to it is equally simple and conclusive. Mr. Minton admits that the "worm" which, in a future state, will gnaw the wicked, and the "fire" which will burn them may continue in operation for a period more prolonged than the human mind can calculate. How can Mr. Minton reconcile this admission with his theory? If he can concede to believers in the endless duration of future punishment, that for an indefinite number of ages "the fire will go on scorching without consuming the living body," and that a dead body will, for the same inconceivably prolonged period, "supply food to a worm that unceasingly preys upon it," he will find in the fact a case "of more astounding vitality" than "was ever discovered in any living body that was ever known." He may, therefore, at once extend the indefinitely-prolonged punishment of the ungodly in a future state to a period which will never end,—even to eternity itself. The universally entertained belief is, that a worm or body of any kind possessing life, would be instantaneously consumed in fire; but Mr. Minton makes the concession that the supposed "worm" or the living body may survive—"scorched, but not consumed"—in the flames of hell for millions of ages. The concession is fatal to his theory; for if the fires of the regions beneath will not

accomplish the destruction of either the worm or the living bodies of the wicked on which it feeds, in any period however prolonged, short of eternity, I can see no reason why he should hesitate to extend his concessions to eternity itself. If, I repeat, the flames of hell were ever to consume those cast into them, they would do it at once. That would be the inevitable result, according to all the known laws of nature.

Mr. Minton, like all Annihilationists, dwells in a very emphatic manner on the assumed idea that the soul is not naturally immortal, but that, on the contrary, its natural and inevitable tendency when it came from the hands of God was to mortality. I do not feel called on to enter into any controversy on this point. Our concern is not with what might have been the state of things had Adam remained in the state of innocence in which he was when he dropped from the hands of his Maker; it is, with what the position of matters is, seeing that he did not remain in the state of innocence in which he was when God created him. Mr. Minton confidently calculates on receiving great assistance to his Annihilationist notions from the fact that such men as the late Archbishop Whately and the Rev. Richard Watson did not believe in the natural immortality of the [soul. Both these eminent

theologians believed that the soul's immortality is the gift of God. I will not quarrel with that view, because I read in the Word of God that "life and immortality have been brought to life by the Gospel." That is enough for me. It concerns me little to know whether or not we inherit an unending life from our first parents; I am satisfied to know that all mankind have it now. But Mr. Minton is not justified in the inference which he appears to draw from the fact that the late Archbishop of Dublin and the late Rev. Richard Watson—the latter one of the brightest ornaments of the Wesleyan body, concurred in his Annihilationist views. On the contrary, it is placed beyond all doubt, that neither shared Mr. Minton's opinions as to future punishments. The gifted Wesleyan was a believer in the endless misery of the wicked. Indeed, if Mr. Richard Watson had been an advocate of the doctrine of Annihilation—as would be inferred from Mr. Minton's language, though the thing be not asserted in so many words—he would have been expelled from the Wesleyan body; for they, without any known exception, are believers in the doctrine of endless misery. With regard, again, to Archbishop Whately, though that learned prelate at one period of his life believed in the doctrine of eventual universal

salvation, he never had the slightest tendency towards a belief in the ultimate annihilation of both soul and body of those who live and die in their sins. But there is ground to believe that Dr. Whately, like Dr. Paley, latterly abjured even this belief, and acquiesced in the doctrine that punishments in a future state will, like rewards, be eternal in their duration. In fact, it is well known that Archbishop Whately's wife and daughters were thoroughly evangelical in their creed, and that the Archbishop, during the later period of his life, sympathized with them on several important points on which he did not before share their views; and it is believed by many that among the changes which his opinions underwent, was his renunciation of the notion of ultimate universal restoration, which, for many years, he entertained.

But it would interfere with my plans were I to devote more space to a refutation of Mr. Minton's Destructionist opinions; nor would I have devoted so much were it not that he has hitherto been a man of position among the evangelical party in the Church of England, and that, being the latest convert to Destructionist views, he may naturally be presumed to have made out what the Destructionists regard as the best case which can be brought forward in sup-

port of the Annihilationist theory. But, besides these considerations, there is another which it is right I should mention. Mr. Minton expresses his mingled surprise and delight at finding that the nine sermons of which this small volume consists brought over, in the course of their being preached, hundreds of his congregation to his Destructionist views. I cannot help asking Mr. Minton a question :—Is he sure that he is correct in making this statement? Does he not labour under some delusion on the point? If the sermons, when preached, wrought such wonderful conviction on his congregation, of course we may expect similar results, in a corresponding proportion, now that they are published. As Mr. Minton's congregation is not a large one, the expression "hundreds" would justify the conclusion that he must have brought over more than half his hearers from a belief in the endless duration of future punishment to a belief in his theory of the ultimate destruction in hell of all the ungodly. It follows that more than half his readers, now that the sermons are published, ought to be induced by Mr. Minton's book to renounce their belief in the eternity of future punishment, and to believe that God, after having terribly tormented the wicked for an indefinitely-prolonged period, will complete his

purposes towards them by their eternal annihilation. I will only add on this point, that if Mr. Minton's logic and Destructionist theology have wrought such a wonderful change on the minds of his congregation, as he here assures us they have done, all I can say is, that they must have been but very indifferently grounded in their previous belief in the unending duration of misery in a future state, and that God has not been bounteous to them in the bestowment of the reasoning faculty.

Mr. Minton is exceedingly unhappy in the title of his book. His title is, indeed, a misnomer. It is, "The Glory of Christ in the Creation and Reconciliation of All Things." That title would have done very well for a work written in favour of Universalism. But it is altogether inappropriate,—it is even at variance with the fact, when it is applied to the theory of Annihilation. "*All things*," according to Mr. Minton's hypothesis, will *not* be reconciled to Christ. All the ungodly are, according to him, to be annihilated, after a fearfully prolonged endurance of the most terrible torments. Surely Annihilation is not "Reconciliation" to Christ. It is strange how Mr. Minton could have fallen into such a mistake. I may mention, in proof of the fact that his title is a misleading one, that all

those persons who have seen the book advertised, but have not seen the book itself, who have spoken to me on the subject, have concluded that the work has been written in favour of Universalism.

“By their fruits ye shall know them.” The effect of Mr. Minton’s new views—new, at least, in the sense of being now avowed for the first time by him—will soon be made manifest in the character of his pulpit ministrations. Even already it appears clear to me that Mr. Minton’s preaching has undergone a great change,—certainly not for the better. I miss in these nine sermons the evangelical spirit, and tone, and terms which characterized his former ministrations. I cannot lay my hand on any passage in his volume which could be considered an appeal to the consciences of sinners in the matter of their salvation. There is nothing having even the semblance of a practical application of his subjects. Humanly speaking, indeed, I see nothing in the book which could lead a single sinner to Christ,—an object of which no one calling himself a minister of the gospel can ever lose sight, without subjecting himself to the charge of unfaithfulness to his Lord and Master.

THE UNIVERSALIST SYSTEM OF FAITH.

THE great distinction between the system of the Destructionists, to whose views I have devoted several chapters, and that of the Universalists, to which I am about to call attention, is, that while the former believe in the annihilation of the wicked, either at the death of the body, at the day of judgment, or after a prolonged period of intolerable torments in a future state, the latter, while also believing that terrible torments, for a period more or less prolonged, will be inflicted on the ungodly,—believe that they will ultimately be restored to the image of God and received into heaven, to be there perfectly and eternally blessed.

That is a belief which the Universalists entertain in common with the Unitarians; but there are other points on which the great majority of Universalists differ from the great majority of Unitarians. The bulk of the latter regard the Lord Jesus Christ as merely human, without

even possessing a portion of the Divine nature. But the Universalists, as a denomination, look upon our Lord as being Divine in a subordinate sense. They consider Him a kind of inferior Deity. They therefore adopt a theological phraseology respecting both the person and work of Christ, which Unitarians do not and could not employ. It is not, it is right here to remark, generally known that Socinus himself ought, properly speaking, to be classed among the Universalists, instead of being placed, as he almost invariably is, among the Unitarians. Speaking generally of the first disciples of Socinus, Mosheim, in his "Ecclesiastical History," observes:—"Justification," say they, "consists in the remission of all our past sins, through the mere grace and mercy of God, in and by our Lord Jesus Christ, without our merit and works, and in consequence of a lively faith; as also in the certain hope of life eternal and the true and unfeigned amendment of our lives and conversations, through the assistance of the Divine Spirit, to the glory of the Father, and the edification of our neighbours." As a writer in one of our leading Encyclopædias remarks, under the head "Anti-Trinitarian," "It is obvious that the sentiments of the Socinians, who were contemporary with the founder of the sect, were not

only less heterodox than those of our modern Unitarians, as regards the doctrines of merit and Divine influence, but even less so than those entertained by many who class themselves among the orthodox." "At this period," Mosheim further says, "the Socinians admitted of prayer to Jesus Christ, though of a kind subordinate to that offered to the Supreme Father." But probably a still more satisfactory proof is furnished by a historical incident, of the fact that Socinus had far higher views of the person and work of Christ than many of those who bear his name at the present day, who call themselves Unitarians. It was in Poland and Transylvania that Socinianism first made its appearance as a theological system. Socinus appointed one Francis Davids as Superintendent of all the Churches in Transylvania which went by his name; but this Francis Davids soon descended so low in his views of the person of Christ as to deny the lawfulness of prayer to our Lord, or of rendering Him any kind of religious worship. This, we are told by Dr. Toulmin, his biographer, was regarded by Socinus as so shocking, that he denounced it as "impious and detestable, pestilential and poisonous," and at once deposed Davids from his office. Some ecclesiastical historians of the period, now nearly three centuries since, go,

indeed, so far as to say that Socinus was the chief cause of the imprisonment which Davids had to suffer for his opinions.

But, instead of presenting my readers with the representations of others relative to the creed of the Universalists, it will be the preferable course to allow themselves to give their own account of the principal points of their faith, so far as these differ from those of other denominations. 'The Universalists in America have several organs. One of the number is a quarterly review, which has existed for more than thirty years. They have also in the United States their monthly, their fortnightly, and their weekly organs; not only in such places as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, or other populous and important localities, but even in small towns, with the names of which the great majority of the people of England are unacquainted. From one of these recognized organs of Universalism in America, which can boast of a fifteen years' existence, I take an enunciation of the Universalist creed—given, too, I ought to mention, so late as the 15th of January last.

The *Universalist Herald* thus describes the existing creed of those of whom it is one of the accredited organs. Omitting some of the minor points in the Universalist creed as thus

given by that journal, that mouthpiece of Universalism says respecting the Lord Jesus Christ:—"He was the only-begotten Son of God, a pure, holy Being, but subordinate to the Father. He pre-existed with the Father, for He says He came down from the Father. He came down to seek and to save the lost. He came down to redeem man from sin, and to restore him to happiness." He tasted death, it is further said by this exponent of Universalism, for every man,—that is, on behalf of every member of the human race. He came to the world, it is added, not to placate the wrath of God to men, but to reconcile the world to God. "And this," they all believe, "He will do." The Universalists, with comparatively few exceptions, believe that, though those who die in their sins are destined to ages of suffering in the world to come, they will at last be redeemed, and received into eternal glory, through what the Lord Jesus suffered and did when He was on earth. They do not employ the phrase of "Christ's atonement for our sins," but they admit that, in some way or other—though they do not undertake to define the process by which it will be accomplished—all who are saved in this world, or will be saved in the world to come, are, and will be, saved through the merits of Christ.

As may be inferred from what I have stated, it is a distinguishing feature in the Universalist creed, that Christ will not deliver up his mediatorial kingdom to the Father at the end of the world or the general judgment. He is to sit on his mediatorial throne, interceding for all those who are consigned to the regions below—for they do admit, in a sense, the doctrine of the Saviour's intercession—until hell has been emptied of all its inhabitants, and every intelligent creature whom God has created has been made perfectly and for ever holy and happy. In harmony with this view they believe in the ultimate salvation of Satan himself and all the fallen angels, now reserved in chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day,—to be then, according to the admissions of Universalists themselves, doomed to endure for a long period, it may be millions of ages, a measure of punishment far transcending in its greatness the powers of the human mind to conceive. Lavater, the celebrated author of the system of Pysiognomy, who was a zealous Universalist, and carried out his principles to their natural results, uniformly prayed, not only for human beings who are now in the regions below, but for all the devils, including him who is their chief. “My prayers,” are his words, “are comprehensive. I embrace in my heart all

that is called man—present, past, and future times, and nature's children in their mother's wombs; the dead, the damned—yea, Satan himself. I present them all to God with the warmest wishes that He would have mercy on them all." Many other Universalists share, in these respects, the views of Lavater, but I am not aware of any of their number who candidly confess that they carry their notions so far as to pray habitually for the conversion of the devil and all the fallen angels. I do not know whether Origen acted up with the same fidelity to his Universalist principles as Lavater did; but according to the testimony of ecclesiastical historians whose accuracy is admitted on all hands, Origen went further in his Universalism than even Lavater or any other Universalist with whom I am acquainted. "He believed," says Dr. Cave, "that Christ died, not only for men, but for angels and devils, and the very heavenly bodies." I believe that Origen is the only one of the Fathers—wild as were the notions of many of their number—that ever advanced so extravagant an idea as that of Christ having died for angels who never sinned, or the "heavenly bodies," of which we can know nothing in our present state of being.

The Universalists attach especial importance

to the assumed fact that they can claim Origen as the founder of their faith. I before mentioned that the assumption is not admitted by all our ecclesiastical writers to be well grounded. But, though I were to make the concession to them that it is. I do not see that they would have much cause to boast of the fact. While it is confessed on all hands that in the variety and depth of his learning, the brilliancy of his genius, and the greatness of his gifts as a writer generally, Origen had no rival among the Fathers of the first four centuries, nor probably in the religious world since his day, yet no theological writer, ancient or modern, could be named who fell into a greater number of extravagant and pernicious errors than he. I would ask those Universalists who are so fond of parading what they regard as a fact, that Origen entertained and zealously advocated their views, whether they are prepared to endorse other sentiments of his in connection with that system of belief? Are they, for example, willing to commit themselves to his views as to the locality and nature of the place of punishment of those who die in their sins, before the work of transformation has taken place, and they fitted for being received into glory? What modern Universalist, I should like to know, will express his agreement with Origen in that article of his faith which

asserts that sin is still committed in heaven, and will be, until the time arrives when evil in every shape, and in every part of God's illimitable empire, shall be completely and for ever vanquished, and be followed by universal and eternal holiness and happiness? Who, among modern Universalists, let me further ask, will admit that they believe with Origen that every one's soul was created before his body, and that at the resurrection the bodies of all will rise in a round form? Who, once more, among those Universalists who glory in claiming Origen as one of their number, will avow their concurrence with him in that article of his creed, that "the sun, moon, stars, and the waters under the firmament, have all souls?"

Lest any one should suppose that I have in this representation of some of the more extravagant views of Origen, misconceived his meaning, I would refer him, if any such there should chance to be, to the celebrated dictionary, in four large folio volumes, of the eminent Jeremiah Collier, published nearly two centuries ago, and admitted to be one of the most accurate historical works which ever issued from the press. These transcendently wild views of Origen are only, let me add, a few out of many which I might have mentioned. Indeed, as I have before remarked, it never has been denied that of all the extrava-

gances which are to be found in the writings of the Fathers, none approach his in the extreme wildness of their character. It follows, therefore, that the fact of Origen having been a zealous Universalist does not, by any means, constitute a recommendation of the theory that all men and all devils too, will, after a prolonged period of punishment in a future state, be restored to holiness, and be made the heirs of an eternal inheritance in heaven.

There were some other Universalists of note among the Fathers towards the latter end of the second and beginning of the third centuries. Among these Origen is generally supposed to have been the first to avow and advocate the doctrine that all men and devils will be finally saved; but some say that the doctrine was promulgated by Clemens of Alexandria, before it had been advanced by Origen. Both these Fathers were contemporaries. Clemens, indeed, was for some time the tutor of Origen. They both flourished in the latter part of the second century. The other best known of the Fathers who entertained Universalist opinions, were Marcellus, Bishop of Ancyra; Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa; Dydimus, the Blind, President of the Catechical School of Alexandria; and Fabius Marinus Victorinus.

Universalism was first introduced into this country in the reign of Edward VI., though it was very little known in that time. Gradually, however, it made some progress in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. Several individuals, indeed, in these latter reigns, were put to death for their avowal of Universalist opinions. In the time of the Commonwealth, the Universalists, though not then called by that name, had increased considerably in numbers. With one exception, however, I have not been able to learn that there was any organized body meeting together for public worship in accordance with their distinctive principles. But no inconsiderable number of clergymen, and several dignitaries of the Church of England, entertained about this period Universalist notions, so far as regarded the ultimate salvation of all mankind. Among those who held this doctrine at this period, or soon after, may be mentioned the names of Archbishop Tillotson; Dr. Burnet; Bishop Newton; Dr. Henry More, Bishop of Norwich; Rev. Jeremy White, chaplain to Oliver Cromwell; Dr. Hartley; Bishop Law; and Sir Isaac Newton.

It is also thought by some that among those who, towards the close of the seventeenth century, ought to be ranked among the Universalists, are Milton and Locke. I believe from all the atten-

tion I have been able to give to the subject, that these two eminent men were to be classed amongst Universalists, in so far as relates to a belief in some indefinable subordination of Christ to God, rather than in the ultimate restoration of all mankind.

I have not included the name of Jeremy Taylor in the above list, because doubts have been expressed by some as to whether the charge of being a Universalist, can with justice be brought against the author of "Holy Living and Holy Dying." But to my mind there is not a shadow of a doubt on the point. Those who are unwilling to admit that Jeremy Taylor was a believer in the ultimate restoration of all men to holiness and happiness, ground their conviction on what his views in the early part of his theological career were. Anyone who will take the trouble to consult his earliest work but one, namely, his "Holy Living and Dying," will find that in the section headed "Occasional Prayers," he appears in the character of a firm believer in the endless duration of future punishments. That work was published in 1651, the year after the appearance of his first work, "The Life of Christ." But in the intervening years his views, originally evangelical in the strictest sense of the term, had undergone a great change; for in 1660 he brought out his "Ductor

Dubitantium, or the Rule of Conscience in all her General Measures," which is a thoroughly Pelagian work ; a fact which of itself might be regarded as presumptive proof that he had by this time embraced Universalism, for I know of no instance in which a thorough Pelagian was not a Socinian ; and all Socinians are Universalists. But apart from this presumptive mode of viewing the subject, there are direct proofs in Jeremy Taylor's later works that he firmly believed in the ultimate restoration of all mankind.

Coming down to the second and third quarters of the last century, there were a number of distinguished Universalists, better known at that time by the name of Arians. Some were dissenters from the Church, but others remained in it who, not content with entertaining privately, as many do, publicly advocated Universalist doctrines. Among the ablest, most learned, and most earnest Universalists a century ago, may be mentioned the names of Bishop Hoadley, Dr. Benson, Mr. Whiston, Dr. Price, Mr. Winchester, Dr. Whitby, Dr. Rees—editor of the well-known "Encyclopædia," which is called by his name—Dr. Hammond, and several others of inferior note. Somewhat later in the century we had, as a Universalist, Bishop Watson, author of "An Apology for the Bible," in reply to "The Age of Reason," by Thomas Paine.

Though not at the moment having access to Bishop Watson's works, and consequently unable to give his very words, I can state with all confidence the substance of his reasonings on the subject. Eternal and inexorable Justice, he said, must and will punish sin. It will, however, do so to the extent, and no more, that sin deserves. But inasmuch as sin is not, and cannot be infinite, its punishment cannot be eternal in its duration. The logical conclusion, Bishop Watson argued from this, is that the sin of even Satan himself, the author of all sin, must be one day expiated in a future state, and the moment it is so his punishment must cease. When I come to the consideration of the question of the duration of future punishments, I shall have to deal with this mode of reasoning.

The Universalists are naturally desirous of claiming all the men of eminence as sharing their views, for whom they can make out a plausible case. This desire often makes them include in their number authors of celebrity in the walks of theology, whose Universalism was at least doubtful. The Rev. William Law, author of "A Serious Call to a Devout and Religious Life," did embrace certain mystical notions originally advanced by the mystical German, Jacob Behmen, but in lately reading very carefully Mr. Law's book

which I have just named—the book to which Dr. Johnson ascribed his conversion, and to which some other eminent men since Dr. Johnson's day have ascribed theirs—I could discern no indications whatever of a Universalist belief. My impression is that Mr. William Law has been confounded with Dr. Edmund Law, Bishop of Carlisle, his contemporary and friend. The mistake was one very likely to occur, as Bishop Law was a Universalist of the most decided type.

But if the Universalists claim eminent men as belonging to their number who never adopted their views, they have a right to enrol in their list the names of other celebrated persons, which those opposed to them have not been willing to concede as entertaining their views. I may mention, as a case in point, the name of Soame Jenyns, author of the well-known work on the “Internal Evidences of Christianity,”—a work which for many years was regarded as one of the most conclusive which had then been written in favour of the truth of the Christian religion. Those who have refused to admit that Mr. Soame Jenyns was a Universalist, have grounded their refusal on the fact that there are no traces of Universalism in the work I have just mentioned. But the fact that Mr. Soame Jenyns was a Universalist, and of a very advanced kind, is placed beyond all

doubt. I lately obtained a copy of all his works in four volumes—very scarce—and in one of his miscellaneous essays, the doctrine of Universalism is not only clearly stated and strenuously advocated, but Mr. Jenyns betrays much more warmth of feeling in vindication of his views on that question, than he does in any other part of his writings.

I have mentioned the name of Mr. Whiston as one of those who was at this period a well-known Universalist, and of whom, because of his great learning and acquaintance with the sciences, the Universalists are proud. Probably it will somewhat diminish this feeling, in relation to Mr. Whiston, when I mention what his notions were respecting the locality, which, he maintained, would be that in which the wicked would undergo punishment,—it may be of countless ages' duration before they are rescued from the regions of wretchedness and introduced to the glory and bliss of the celestial world. The place of punishment assigned to the ungodly will, according to Mr. Whiston, be in the comets, which he represents as so many "hells appointed in their orbits alternately to carry the damned to the confines of the sun, there to be scorched by its violent heat, and then to return with them beyond the orb of Saturn, there to starve them in those cold and

dismal regions." Is it not marvellous that the opinions of a man as to the duration of future punishments, who could advance a notion so supremely absurd as to the place and nature of future punishments, should be deemed worthy of the slightest notice?

Dante, in his description of the nature of the punishment which will be endured in the abodes of perdition, gives great prominence to the notion that one source of their misery will be that they shall have unceasingly to swim in a sea of liquid fire. And Milton, in his "Paradise Lost," advances the idea that the chief ingredient in their intense sufferings will be their subjection to the extremes of heat and cold. They, he says,

"Will feel the change of fierce extremes,—
By change more fierce."

But then it is to be remembered that Dante and Milton were two of the greatest poets that any age or country has ever produced, and poets, we all know, are allowed a licence both in relation to the exercise of the imagination, and the mode of expression, which is not accorded to men who, like Whiston, claim to be regarded both as philosophers and theologians.

The Universalists are an important sect in America. The first Universalist preacher under that name in the United States was the Rev. Mr. Murray

who had been the colleague, at Birmingham, of Dr. Priestly. He commenced his pulpit ministrations in America, in the year 1776. Mr. Murray, therefore, may be said to have been the founder of the sect. Soon after he established the new denomination, Dr. Priestly followed him to the United States, and notwithstanding the Doctor's high reputation, actually preached there for ten years to from thirty to forty people. The Universalists in America now number no fewer than 600,000 adherents. The number of their places of worship is, according to the census returns of 1867, about 550. Last year they raised nearly £400,000 for denominational purposes. It is the general belief in this country that the Unitarians are much more numerous in the United States than the Universalists. This is a mistake. The latter are three times as numerous as the former. The entire number of Unitarians in the New World is under 200,000. Boston is their stronghold; but even there there are several of their preachers whose opinions, can scarcely be said, with propriety, to accord with those of Unitarians, in the sense in which the designation is generally received. The views of some, for example, approach to, if they are not essentially the same as those of, the late Dr. Channing, whose conceptions of the work and character of Christ are of so exalted an order that it is with

difficulty, at times, when reading his writings on that subject, that one can bring oneself to doubt that he believed in the perfect divinity of our Lord. On the other hand, there are in Boston, Unitarian ministers whose views of Christ are so low that they hardly look on Him as perfect, even if only regarded as a man. They are, in fact, like the late Theodore Parker, so many modified Deists. The chief bond of the Boston Unitarians is their common belief in the ultimate salvation of the whole human race. The higher class of Unitarians, I ought to mention, and the lower class of Universalists approximate so nearly to each other's sentiments on theological topics generally, that the Unitarians, so late as last year, made a formal proposal to the Universalists for an amalgamation of both into one body. But the proposal was rejected by a large majority of the Universalists, on the ground that though agreeing with the Unitarians so far as relates to the belief in the ultimate salvation of all mankind, yet that they entertain far higher views of the person, the character, and work of Christ, than the majority of the Unitarians do. And to this fact I can bear my testimony from an examination of several of those journals which are recognized Universalist organs. Their sermons, indeed, and many of their periodicals, contain specimens of

pulpit discourses and of writing, which seemingly bear so much about them of the savour of an Evangelical theology, that it is difficult to resist the conviction that they come from thoroughly Evangelical lips and pens. Let me present the reader with two specimens confirmatory and illustrative of this. I make my first extract from one of their journals recognized as one of the organs of their sentiments. I have not at the moment the periodical before me to which I allude, and do not, therefore, undertake to give the exact words, but I can pledge myself for the correctness of what I say respecting the theology of the extract. Taking as a text or motto, the well-known words, "And yet there is room," the Universalist journal goes on to this effect: "Yes, there is yet room—room for sinners of every description if they will only repent and believe the Gospel. No matter how great their guilt, there is still room—room in the heart of God—room in heaven—room in God's mercy—room in the merits and mediation of Jesus—room too in the work of the Holy Spirit. Sinners everywhere and of all classes are called to come to Christ and be saved by Him. The Father is willing, the Son is willing, and the Holy Ghost is willing, that the very worst of sinners should escape perdition, and be made the heirs of glory." These very for-

cible appeals to the conscience are intermingled with the doctrinal statements usually made by American Universalist preachers and authors; and but that every now and then the doctrine of ultimate universal restitution is brought out, it would be difficult to detect anything in their theology at variance with the received Evangelical divinity.

The Universalists, as a denomination, believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures, and their consequent authority. Here are the terms in which *Zion's Trumpet*, one of their recognized organs, speaks on this subject in a recent number:—"Who can estimate the value of the Bible? The sceptic scorns it, because his heart is a stranger to its spirit; but to the Christian soul, it is God's choicest gift. We cannot over-estimate the value of the Bible. It is the oldest book extant, and at the same time the best. It contains the religious history of the world. Beginning at the beginning, it traces along the course of events, developing the plans and purposes of God, and crowning all with the gift of his Son, who came to lead us to life eternal. The Bible is the solace of the suffering and afflicted. It whispers hope in the ears of the dying. It comforts mourners, dries the tear from the cheek of the orphan, and points us all, in the midst of our

afflictions, to that building of God, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The Bible, too, is the hope of the world. On it the destinies of all nations hang. We live in times of great excitement; times of intense intellectual effort. And the moral pulse of every people is beating quick. Great principles are taking root in human souls. God's ideas are being developed. And on the theatre of the world the drama of redemption is being acted. We see everywhere signs of progress which are truly encouraging. But everything is in the direction of the Bible, in its spirit. Its central ideas are the key-notes of the nations. All hearts are yearning for spiritual life. And if we rightly interpret the appearances of society, we shall discover, behind the darkest scenes, a brighter light struggling into being, to diffuse its blessings in every home. Oh, the Bible is all that the soul can ask for. It is a priceless boon. And we shall show the truest wisdom by consulting it daily; by following its guidance; by drinking in its heavenly spirit."

The titles, too, of most of the Universalist organs in the press, have much of the Evangelical savour about them—as, for instance, "The Gospel Messenger," "The Gospel Ambassador," "Zion's Trumpet," etc. So, too, with regard to

their works on practical divinity. Among the titles of Universalist works of this nature now lying before me, I find the following:—"The Crown of Thorns," "The Christian Victor," "Comfort in Sorrow," etc. There is also great fervour of feeling in their meetings, often developing itself into something approaching what we read of as characteristic of what are called camp-gatherings.

Though all Universalists believe, in some form or other, in the ultimate holiness, happiness, and admission into heaven, of all mankind, and of the devil and his angels too, there is considerable diversity of sentiment among them as to the circumstances under which this "universal redemption"—a phrase which they more frequently employ than any other—will take place. They differ as to the probable period when, and the specific instrumentality, by which the final destruction of all evil and the establishment of universal and eternal good, are destined to be accomplished; but on these subordinate points of the Universalists' scheme I forbear to enter.

I must not, however, omit to advert to an entirely new feature which has been recently introduced into that system, and adopted both in America and in this country. I allude to the notion that those who live and die in their sins

will be restored and saved at death. This is different from the creed of those who believe that the ungodly will be annihilated at death. In the time of Origen some of the Fathers embraced the opinion that at death the souls of all, as well as their bodies, would die, but would be raised again at the general resurrection, and then a term of punishment would be assigned to the ungodly. But it is said that Origen not only demolished this new phase of the Universalist theory, to the satisfaction of others, but to those who were its authors and advocates, and that consequently it ceased to exist. This idea seemed a sort of compromise between Universalism and Annihilation. But the new feature introduced of late into Universalism by some, is entirely different from that which was advanced in Origen's day, and which he demolished. The former wore a more sombre aspect; but the latter is one which must be pleasant to the eye of all the ungodly. What, indeed, could be more grateful to man's corrupt nature than to be told that there will not only be no future punishment of any kind, not even for a single hour, but that at death, no matter how sinful the whole course of one's life may have been, there will be immediate restoration to perfect holiness and happiness, and admission into heaven?

The general opinion, so far as relates to reason, on which this new theory of Universalism is based, is that it would be incompatible with what we know of the character of God, that He should punish in the next world any of his creatures for what they have thought, or said, or done, in this. The wicked, it is contended by the advocates of this new phase of Universalism, are sufficiently punished by the remorse caused by the reproaches of their consciences, where they have not committed such crimes against society as would subject them to the punishment inflicted by our courts of justice. That, according to this novel theory, is all the punishment which those who live immorally on earth will ever receive. At death they are not to be annihilated, according to the belief of a large section of the Destructionists, but to be restored to the image of their maker, and made for ever perfectly happy as well as holy. In accordance with this theory, its advocates speak of a second Saviour, namely, Death. To make their system consistent with itself, this new school of Universalists equally repudiate the idea of there being any rewards in heaven for good deeds done on earth. Their theory is, that the approval of the consciences of the virtuous is ample reward for an exemplary course of life in this world.

As these views will naturally startle the reader, as coming from a body of men who call themselves Universalists, and whose leaders are persons of high education, I deem it desirable to show that I neither misrepresent nor misconceive their sentiments. Let me, therefore quote from their own journals. Dr. Dolphus Skinner, one of the most distinguished Universalists of America, has entered into a controversy with a brother minister, in which he says, that if the new view of Universalism be what he has said, he is no Universalist. Dr. Skinner gives us a condensation of the chief grounds of the new creed in the following terms, in the correctness of which both he and his opponent concur:—"Men," it is said, "do not sow seed in one country, and go to another country to reap the harvest. I do not believe in sowing wheat or tares in America, and going to Europe to reap the fruits. We expect to reap the harvest in the field where the seed is sown; and it is equally *absurd and illogical to argue that men will reap in another world the fruits of their good or evil deeds, of their virtues or vices, in this world.* This I will acknowledge is the substance of your argument, if such you call it; though the form is often varied."

Before I proceed to make any observation in answer to the astounding theory, that all vice is

sufficiently punished and all virtue sufficiently rewarded in this world, I wish to submit two authoritative extracts from the writings of this new school of Universalists, to show that I have correctly represented their views in relation to there being two Saviours—Christ and Death. The American Universalists, as I before stated, have had a *Quarterly Review* for the last thirty years. It is an able periodical, and is considered the greatest authority in the United States on the subject of Universalism. Well, then, let us hear what it says in reference to the point in question. I quote from the same Rev. Dr. Skinner. “A professed Universalist” of our school has, he says, “lately written and published in our denominational *Quarterly*, two articles, both very significant, bearing on this subject, one entitled ‘Death and Glory,’ and the other, ‘Salvation,’—in the last of which he distinctly takes the ground that Christ will never save all mankind—that He saves only the few who believe on Him in this life—Death saves all the rest; and that the only sense in which He can ever be called the Saviour of the world, or of all men, is that, if the millennium ever occurs, when all who shall then live on the earth shall know and obey Him, all of *that generation*, or *those generations*, will be saved by Him! If

this is genuine Universalism, I am no Universalist."

Even more explicitly and more emphatically is this new and startling doctrine brought forward by the Rev. Mr. Morris, another man of mark among the Universalists. Only a few months ago this Universalist thus writes:—"For my part I can see no use or necessity for carrying pain, or suffering, or punishment into the future state, at all; nor do I perceive any good or substantial reason for carrying punishment there. We know that sin is punished in this life: then why should it be punished again in the next? Are men to be punished twice for the same offence? And whence does sin originate, but in our carnal, earthly, or fleshly natures? If it originates in the flesh, will it not end in the flesh? What is the use of punishing men after they are dead? Men cannot do it, and I feel assured that God will not." Another Universalist minister, the Rev. Mr. Shaw, begins a communication to one of the Universalist journals thus:—"For the last fourteen years I have been preaching in my feeble manner what I conceive to be the Gospel of Christ, denying all punishments after death."

I have spoken of replying to this new Universalist theory. I should not have thought of

saying a single word in answer to it, were it not that it has found its way into this country. Though I have not yet seen it so broadly and boldly averred as it is from various pulpits and in various Universalist journals in the United States, the *Spectator* newspaper, only a few months ago, in a paragraph appended to the communication of a correspondent in relation to the influence which our beliefs in this world have on our own destiny in the next, says:—

“Our correspondent appears to believe that various creeds, true and false, exercise various influences, salutary or otherwise, over the life of man here and hereafter. In this we heartily agree.” There is something, which to my mind is of difficult comprehension in these two sentences, and therefore, I will not make any observations upon them. But there is nothing dubious as to the sentiment expressed in the sentence which follows:—“It is,” says the Editor of the *Spectator*, for he acknowledges that the paragraph is written by himself, not by any contributor—“It is the theory that damnation is an external and deferred punishment, inflicted in the next life for errors entertained in this,—that alone warrants an attempt at united protest.” Nothing could be more plain from this language than that the Editor of the *Spectator*

believes that no one will be punished in the world to come, for the creed he cherished or the deeds he committed in this life. This is evidently the same new phase in substance as that novel form of Universalism to which I have been advert-
ing as now making great progress in the United States. The only thing I am doubtful about is whether or not the *Spectator* believes that there will be some punishment in a future state for sins which will be committed in that state by those who were sinners and died in their sins in this world. It is often difficult to attach any definite meaning to the language of the Rev. Mr. Maurice, because it is so obscure or mystical, but I am disposed to believe that this is also the most recent phase of his faith as regards the future. One thing is certain,—that on the subject of future punishments, if there are to be any in the world to come, there has hitherto been a wonderful identity of belief between Mr. Maurice and the *Spectator*.

Here let me remark, parenthetically, in thus advert-
ing to some of the views of Mr. Maurice, that he seems lately to have very greatly enlarged in various respects, the comprehensiveness of his Universalist creed. Not content with the ultimate salvation of all mankind, he now seemingly embraces in his enlarged faith that of the

whole of the brute creation. In November last he preached, as Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Cambridge, four sermons on universal restoration. These sermons have been published within the last few months, under the title of "The Ground and Object of Hope for Mankind." And curiously enough, the conclusion of the volume is in these words:—
 "We may be confident that every enemy of Christ shall be put under his feet. We dare not reject the Divine promise, 'that every creature which is in the heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all that are in them, shall be heard saying, Blessing and honour, power and glory be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb for ever and ever.' " This language of Scripture Mr. Maurice seemingly accepts in its literal sense; and, to give greater importance to it, he puts it in italics. If he does receive the passage in its literal interpretation, he must be a believer in the universal redemption of the brute creation. Dr. Adam Clarke, like several other eminent writers, was a believer in the eternal happiness of the brute creation, but he was no believer, like Mr. Maurice, in the universal salvation of mankind.

I have said that the American advocates of the new phase of Universalist faith on which I

have been animadverting, ground their belief almost exclusively on what they regard as reason. They are sufficiently candid to admit that it does not receive much sanction from Scripture, as Scripture is generally understood. I maintain that no part of the Bible gives the slightest countenance to it. The text most quoted by those who hold this novel theory as that which, they contend, gives support to it, is the seventh verse of the sixth chapter of Paul's First Epistle to Timothy, where it is said:—"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." One feels a certain degree of humiliation at being called on to reply to an argument, grounded on this text of Scripture, in favour of the hypothesis, that no one will be either rewarded or punished in the world to come, for the deeds which have been done in this world. If this be so, then the doctrine of a general judgment, enunciated and attested in the most explicit terms in so many parts of Scripture, is nothing more or less than a pure fiction. If this latest importation of dangerous doctrines from America be true, its advocates must admit that there is at least one striking exception to it in the records of that Book, which they still strangely admit to constitute a Divine revelation. The case to which I allude will at once occur to the

reader's mind. The rich man in the parable of our Lord found that the doctrine that man will not be punished in the next world for the deeds done in this, was not verified in his case. The moment he died, before he had time, if I may so express myself, to commit more sin, "he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." And what was the experience of this rich man will most surely be the experience of all who die in their sins, for he is set before us in the way of warning as a personal exemplification of the great truth that the sins of the ungodly in this world will follow them in the world to come. It is often true in our present state of being, that the sins of the wicked will find them out; but in another state of being that will *certainly* be the case, and in a special sense. And not only will the sins of the sinner then most surely find him out, though they never did before, the moment he has passed the portals of the world to come, but it will be found in the cases of those whose sins have in a measure found them out in this life, that they will do so to an inconceivably greater extent in the life which is to come.

But I can hardly bring myself to reason on the subject. There is something absolutely astounding in the fact—which would indeed be utterly incredible if it did not stare us in the face

that intelligent men, who profess to receive the Bible as the Word of God, could be found who deny the doctrine that vice committed in this world will be punished, or virtue practised be rewarded, in the world to come. Not more solemn than explicit on this point are the words of our Lord in various parts of his recorded history; but the great fact, that men will be punished or rewarded in a future state for their vices or their virtues in this life, is brought out with a fearful force in the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel by Matthew. To the same effect is the uniform language of all the apostles, and that of the Book of Revelation. Let those who have embraced the doctrine that there will be no punishment in a future state for sins committed in this world, seriously ponder the words of Peter, where he says, “The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust” which means sinners of any and every kind—“unto the day of judgment, to be punished.”

But facts, as well as arguments, derived from Scripture might, it would be supposed, suffice to make as clear as the light of the sun when shining in his meridian splendour, the utter groundlessness of this novel feature in Universalism,—that no one will be either punished or rewarded in a future state for his conduct in this world.

I should like to see any of this class of Universalists undertake the task of reconciling this new phase of their creed with the doom of the fallen angels. No Universalist, with the Bible in his hands, and acquiescing in its statements regarding facts, will question what is said in relation to what the fallen angels once were, and what they now are. They became, when in heaven, rebels against the government of God, and because of that rebellion were not only expelled from heaven, but, to keep to the phraseology of Scripture, "were cast into hell." They are there still, after a period of at least six thousand years ; and we know not but it may have been for millions of years, inasmuch as we do not know at what period in eternity they were ejected from heaven. Of this we are certain, that they will be there until the day of judgment, which may not come, for anything we know to the contrary, for myriads of years. Need I name the cause of their being in the abodes of perdition? Any one who reads his Bible knows what it was that brought them to the place where they now are. It was "because they kept not their first estate." It was because they sinned in heaven that they were cast out of heaven and consigned to hell; and it is for the same reason that they are still there. Now we could have safely inferred from their doom, even

had Scripture been silent on the subject, that God would punish the ungodly in a future state for what they do in the present world. God, we know, must necessarily administer the affairs of his moral government on certain defined principles which must harmonize together. If He has punished, up till the present moment, the angels who sinned against Him in heaven, by subjecting them in hell to sufferings of whose intensity we can form no adequate conception, we might infer, as before remarked, even if the Bible made no specific utterances on the subject, that those who rebel or sin against Him on earth, will be punished in another state of being for their rebellion or their sins.

But, even putting aside for the moment the teachings of Scripture on the subject, the dictates of mere unassisted reason inevitably lead to the conclusion that our destiny, whether for good or evil, in the world to come, will be dependent on our conduct in the world that now is. No one who believes in God has ever for a moment doubted, or ever for a moment can doubt, that He is righteous in all his ways, as well as holy in all his works. The Judge of all the earth will, we know, as we are told in Scripture, do right. Well, then, is it not every day proved from each individual's personal observation, as well as from the records of history,

whether sacred or profane, that in this world vice is not always punished, nor virtue rewarded. We often see, as David in his day saw, the wicked flourish and prosper as a green bay tree, while the godly, as in the case of Job, have to encounter trials and endure sorrows in every variety of form, almost every hour of their lives. God, therefore, would not be a righteous moral governor of the universe, if there were neither punishments nor rewards in the world to come for deeds done in the body here. Let us not be told that the reproaches of the ungodly man's own conscience are punishment enough for his sinful conduct in this world, and that the approval of a godly man's conscience is a sufficient reward for a life of virtue. The wicked in innumerable cases either never have, practically, a conscience at all, or it has become seared as with a red-hot iron, and consequently, never knows what remorse is; while the good—made so by the grace of God, but still having all the failings and infirmities incident to our common nature—are destined to go through seas of sorrow all their lives, supported only by the blessed and sure conviction that theirs will be a happy and glorious hereafter,—unending as eternity itself.

But besides this view of this new and astounding doctrine, that no one will be punished in a future state for his conduct here,

however great and numerous his sins, or even how atrocious his crimes may have been in this world,—there comes this other consideration, namely, whether it was worthy of God to send his own best-beloved Son into the world, in the fulness of time, to suffer and to die for sinners, if no one would be subjected to any other punishment for his guilt than that which he would suffer in this world from the reproaches and remonstrances of his own conscience. The very idea has not the shadow of a claim to be considered, because it carries on its very face a reflection on the love of God for his Son Jesus Christ. The mind recoils at the bare supposition that God could have sent his Son into the world, if that was to be all, in order that He might die for the guilty. Equally inexplicable would be the fact, on the assumption that this theory is correct, that our Lord Jesus Christ would have divested Himself of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and, assuming our nature in its most humiliating form, should have knowingly and cordially consented to suffer and die for us.

With regard to the chief feature of all the forms and phases of Universalism, namely, the non-eternity of future punishments, I shall apply myself in my next chapter to the consideration of that awfully momentous question.

THE DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENTS.

PART FIRST.

I now approach the consideration of one of the most important and most solemn subjects which ever occupied the attention of the human mind. And if I know myself, I approach it with feelings of fear and trembling. These feelings arise from misgivings, which no language can describe, lest so momentous a subject should suffer in my hands. I have in my time written numerous books on a great variety of subjects, and in many cases in relation to theological topics, with a profound sense of the momentous nature of the questions to be discussed. But I never felt so deeply affected as I do now by a consciousness of the magnitude of the issues involved in the question to which I am about to invite the most serious attention of my readers.

Before, however, proceeding to the discussion of the inconceivably important question,—*Will or will not the punishment in a future*

state of those who live and die in their sins, be eternal in its duration?—it is desirable, in order that the reader may more fully comprehend it in its varied phases, that I should glance at the history of theories of the non-eternity of future punishments from the time of the Fathers in the second century till the present day. As those who reject the doctrine of everlasting punishment are in the habit of saying that Universalism was prevalent during the Patristic period of the Church's history, it will be necessary to prove that the assumption is entirely groundless.

It is likewise desirable that the question should be discussed as between all who, like myself, firmly believe in the unending misery of those who die in their sins, and the Unitarians and Universalists who believe in the limited duration of future punishments. Though differing on other points, these two denominations are quite in accord as to the corrective object of punishment, with a view to the ultimate restoration of those who will be miserable in the world to come. When, therefore, I have to speak of eminent authors who believe in the cessation of future punishments, I will, in what I shall hereafter have to say, speak of them indiscriminately as Universalists in that sense, and to that extent.

I have said in a previous chapter that Origen was the first of the Fathers, so far as the ecclesiastical history of the second century can be depended on, who broached Universalist notions. This, I believe, has never been disputed. Indeed, I do not well see how it could be, in the presence of a passage in the works of Augustine, in which, in protesting against the doctrine of the endless duration of punishment in a future state, it is denounced as a heresy, which had just, for the first time, been brought before the Christians of that period. Some Universalists have asserted that Clement, who preceded Origen, and is called one of the apostolic fathers, was an advocate of the doctrine of limited punishments in a future state. Not only has no authority been produced in favour of the statements, but none can be so, because none exists. Clement was the author of two Epistles to the Corinthians, which Dr. Lardner and some of our best critics and commentators, have always regarded as thoroughly sound in their teachings,—though, not being inspired books, as some have foolishly said they were. “If,” he said, “we do the will of Christ, we shall find rest. But, if otherwise, He will in no wise rescue us from endless punishment.” In presence of these words, no man can honestly

say that Clement was a believer in the non-eternity of the misery of the ungodly in a future state of existence. But to make his opinions still more clear on the point, he quotes in support of his belief in the eternity of punishments in the world which is to succeed the present, the words of our Lord, "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Ignatius was no Universalist. In his Epistle to the Ephesians, he uses the words, "He that is thus defiled shall depart into unquenchable fire."

Polycarp has recorded his views on the subject, in language so clear that no one can mistake his meaning. When threatened by the then Roman pro-consul, with being burnt to death unless he recanted what he had spoken and written in favour of Christianity, his answer was: "The fire thus threatened can burn but for an hour, and will speedily expire; know, then, that there is a fire of approaching judgment and *everlasting* punishment perpetually fed for the profane."

Equally explicit, and in some respects still stronger, is the language of Justin Martyr, when speaking of the doom in the next world of the ungodly in this. "If," he says, "it be not so,"—namely, that the unrighteous shall be punished in *everlasting* fire,—“then there is no God; or if there be, He troubles not Himself about them;

neither virtue nor vice can exist, and legislators unjustly punish those who transgress what is set forth as good." I invite especial attention to this brief passage from the first of Justin Martyr's two "Apologies," because some of those who disbelieve in eternal punishment endeavour to make out that he entertained the opinion that the misery of the wicked in a future state will only be for a limited term. The Rev. Dr. John Taylor, of Norwich, who might have been assumed to be an Universalist, from the fact, did we not know from authentic sources, even from his own avowal, it was so,—that it was with him a kind of boast that he had read the Bible twenty times from beginning to end, and yet could not discover the doctrine of the Atonement in it,—Dr. Taylor argues that Justin Martyr believed in the limited duration of future punishment, because the following passage is alleged by him to be found in his writings:—"They who are designed to punishment shall abide so long as God is pleased to have them to live and to be punished." It so happens that this language was *not* that of Justin Martyr. It was the language of the Father, who was his venerated and venerable instructor in the principles of Christianity. But even had the words been those of Justin Martyr,

there is nothing in them to militate against his belief in the doctrine of eternal punishments. It is clear that the expression that the ungodly "shall abide as long as God is pleased to have them to live and be punished," does not necessarily limit the period of their punishment. It is evidently compatible with the eternal punishment of the wicked in a future state, inasmuch as the author makes the duration of their misery contingent on the sovereign pleasure of God.

With regard to Irenæus, the next of the most celebrated divines of the Patristic period, taking them in their chronological order,—I have vindicated him in another part of this volume from the charge of being an advocate of the limited duration of future punishment. Since then, and after that part of this volume was in type, I have met with a work by the late Rev. Dr. Richard Winter Hamilton, of Leeds, entitled, "The Revealed Doctrine of Rewards and Punishments," in which I find the following two quotations from the writings of Irenæus, which place beyond all doubt the fact that he was a firm believer in the doctrine of eternal punishments. Let me here remark, parenthetically, that I am indebted to Dr. Hamilton's work for several of my brief quotations from the writings of the Christian Fathers of the second, third,

and fourth centuries. The first quotation from Irenæus is as follows :—“ Christ shall send the impious and the unjust, and the lawless and the blasphemous of mankind into endless fire.” Our second is this :—“ They who fly from the eternal light of God, which contains in it all good things, are themselves the cause of their inhabiting eternal darkness, destitute of all good things, becoming themselves the cause of this habitation.”

Tertullian has been claimed by some advocates of the limited duration of future punishments, as one who concurred in their views. I am not surprised at this, because, like Origen, he entertained opinions on some points which were the opposite of evangelical. He held notions respecting the Holy Ghost, which were wholly at variance with those commonly received as orthodox. He also maintained that the souls of the righteous will require after the death of the body certain purifications before they can be admitted into heaven. I regard him, indeed, as in effect the author of the doctrine of purgatory. At any rate, we can find no trace of that doctrine in the Christian writers who preceded him. Tertullian is, on that account, a special favourite with the Roman Catholics, because they see in his writings the germ of the doctrine of purgatory which they have more fully developed. They have greatly

improved on him in relation to the importance which they attach to the purgatorial theory. Yet, notwithstanding this, Tertullian was a firm believer, just as the Roman Catholics now are, in the doctrine that there never will be a termination to the torments of those who, at the judgment-day, will be cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. On this point he utters no uncertain sound. No language could be more decided on the subject than that which he employs both in his work against Marcion and in his still better known work, "The Apology." In two chapters of the latter book he strenuously and somewhat elaborately maintains, that the punishments of the wicked will endure through all eternity.

With regard to Athanasius, I need not say a single word in connection with this subject. He is, perhaps, the only one of the Fathers who has not, at some period or other, or to some extent, been suspected of being a disbeliever in eternal punishments. The creed known by his name contains an utterance on the point so very explicit and emphatic as to preclude the possibility of anyone misconceiving his views in relation to the destiny of the wicked in a future world.

Some writers contend that Chrysostom, who may be regarded as the last of the eminent

Fathers in the Patristic period of the Christian church, ought to be placed in the category of those who reject the doctrine of eternal punishments. There is no foundation for the assumption. I look upon one expression in Chrysostom's writings as being conclusive in favour of his being a believer in the eternity of future punishments. The sentence to which I allude is one which occurs in his twenty-third Homily, and is as follows :—"As here, these punishments"—the punishments inflicted on the ungodly in this world,—“follow to the close of the present life, so there”—that is in a future state—"they *continue permanently.*"

The belief in a limited duration of future punishment has not only been held by a few men of note since the middle of the seventeenth century down till the present time, but various works have been written during that interval for the express purpose of vindicating that view. For the information of those who may take an interest in a subject which so deeply concerns the whole human race, that of the duration of punishments in the world to come,—it is right that I should mention some of the best known writers in favour of the non-eternity of misery in a future state. A work which the late Dr. Southwood Smith—to whose writings on the subject

I shall have occasion to advert hereafter—describes as one of great ability, was supposed to be written in 1658, though not published till the year 1708. The author's name is believed to be Mr. Richardson. Its title is calculated to attract attention from its quaintness. It is, “Of the Torments of Hell : the Foundation and Pillars thereof Discovered, Searched, Shaken, and Removed. With Infallible Proofs that there is not to be a Punishment after this Life, for any to endure, that shall never End.”

Dr. Henry Moore published a work in 1668, in favour of the non-eternity of future punishment. Its title was “Divine Dialogues.” It attracted much attention at the time of its publication, and our modern rejectors of the doctrine of endless misery still continue to quote freely from it.

I have mentioned the name of Jeremy White, chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, as among the men of celebrity who believed in the eventual salvation of the wicked, after enduring an amount of punishment more or less prolonged, in a future state. That well-known divine, of the Unitarian school, published a work in favour of his views, under the title of “The Restoration of all Things ; or a Vindication of the Grace and Goodness of God, to be manifested at last on the

Recovery of His whole Creation out of their Fall.”

But probably the most popular book advocating the same class of opinions, which was published in the middle of last century, was one by the Chevalier Ramsay, entitled “The Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion Unfolded in a Geometrical Order.” This work, in two volumes, is still much quoted by the opponents of eternal punishments.

The Rev. Dr. Charles Chauncey, of Boston, America, published two works in 1784, in favour of the limited duration of future punishments. The title of the one was, “The Mystery hid from Ages and Generations made manifest by the Gospel Revelation ; or, the Salvation of All Men, the Grand Thing aimed at in the Scheme of God, as opened in the New Testament Writings, and entrusted with Jesus Christ to bring into Effect.” The title of Dr. Chauncey’s second work on the subject is, “The Benevolence of the Deity Considered.” As Dr. Chauncey’s writings on the question of the duration of punishments are received till this day in America as the ablest that have ever been written on the same side of the question, I will, by and by, as I before stated I would, devote much of my space to a refutation of Dr. Chauncey’s views.

In 1791, Dr. David Hartley, a learned, a thoughtful, and able writer, brought out a work advocating the ultimate salvation of all men, under the title of "Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations." This work still occupies a high place in the estimation of Unitarians and Universalists. Dr. Southwood Smith, a decided Unitarian, says of Dr. Hartley's volume, "It is a work which does honour to human nature. One feels proud to belong to the same order of intelligences with the mind which could compose it."

Mr. Edward Winchester published a volume, in the last year of the past century, advocating the doctrine of the non-eternity of the punishment of those who die in their sins. The title of Mr. Winchester's work was, "The Universal Restoration, Exhibited in a Series of Dialogues between a Minister and his Friend." Mr. Winchester was, perhaps, the ablest writer—certainly he was so considered by those who shared his views—on his side of the question during the latter part of the last century.

In a few years after the publication of the above-named work from the pen of Mr. Winchester, came another in favour of the same views, written by the late Theophilus Lindsey, the well-known Unitarian preacher in Essex

Street Unitarian Chapel, after he resigned his living in the Church of England. The title of Mr. Lindsey's work was, "Conversations on the Divine Government, showing that Everything is from God, and for Good to All."

In the same year, namely, 1803, Mr. W. Vidler, who had a long and animated controversy with the late Andrew Fuller, as to the duration of future punishment, published a volume under the title of "Letters to Mr. Fuller, on the Universal Restoration, with a Statement of the Facts connected with that Controversy."

Omitting several other authors, more or less eminent, who wrote in favour of the ultimate salvation of all mankind, my last reference but two to that class of writers will be to a work published by John Prior Estlin, LL.D., Bristol, under the title of "Discourses on an Universal Restitution, delivered to the Society of Protestant Dissenters in Lewin's Mead, Bristol." Another work, which stood high among the opponents of eternal punishment, for some years after its publication, was often referred to as an authority on the adverse side of the question. It was in two volumes. Its title is, "Theological Disquisitions. By Thomas Cogan, Esq., M.D." The temporary popularity of the work was to be chiefly ascribed to the blended benevolence

and intellect which characterized it. If I remember rightly, it was one of the first works I ever read in connection with the question of the duration of future punishment.

Last of all, the late Dr. Southwood Smith brought out, in 1822, a work in advocacy of the same views, which some say is the best book which has been written on his side of the question, under the title of "Illustrations of the Divine Government." To Dr. Estlin's volume, as well as to that of Dr. Southwood Smith, I shall have occasion to advert in a subsequent chapter.

I have referred, in a previous part of this chapter, to the groundless claims made by Universalists to include particular names in the list of ancient authors, as holding their views in a more or less modified form. But until within the last few months, I had not met with any writer who had ventured to include the names of Calvin and Jonathan Edwards, of America, amongst those who disbelieved in the doctrine of endless punishment in the world to come. That statement was made in the beginning of August last by a writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. As an able and eminent Unitarian, formerly a minister in that body, and now holding a high position in it, is the reputed writer of most of the theological articles which appear in that journal, I presume

that the statement in question was made by him. I wish he had mentioned in which of their works, either Calvin or President Edwards had written anything which could be regarded as an authority for the statement that he rejected the doctrine of everlasting punishment.

With respect to both these eminent men, I regard the charge as wholly groundless. In relation to Calvin, I may mention that since I read the statement in the journal I have named, I have carefully consulted no fewer than six biographies of that distinguished divine, and in neither of them can I find a single sentence which expresses any doubts on his part as to the endless duration of future punishment. He was accused in his lifetime of denying the divinity of Christ, and consequently the doctrine of the Trinity,—a charge from which, because of its prevalence, and the position of some of the parties by whom it was specifically preferred, he felt it his duty publicly to defend himself. It appears to me, therefore, not improbable that, as he was thus charged with Unitarianism, and as all Unitarians deny the doctrine of eternal punishment, the charge in question had its origin in that way. Nothing, so far as my memory serves me, giving the slightest countenance to the belief that he denied the endless duration of future punish-

ments, appears in either of his two great works, his "Christian Institutes," or his "Commentaries on the Epistles." It is true, that Calvin did not believe in the literal descriptions, in the New Testament, of hell as being a "lake of fire and brimstone," or in the punishment of the wicked by "a worm which dieth not." The chief element in the misery of the lost will be, according to his view, in their sense of exclusion from the favour of God, and the reproaches of their consciences because of the ungodliness of their lives on earth, which had brought them to their dismal doom. But that is an entirely different thing from his denying the endless duration of future punishment.

With regard to President Edwards, I have lately read his work on the Affections, and previous to that had read his work on the Freedom of the Will, but I could discern nothing in either of these great works which would justify the belief in the statement that the author entertained the opinion that future punishments will be of limited duration. Indeed, there is no theological author, with whose writings I am acquainted, that I should have thought less likely to have adopted the limited duration theory. I read, on the contrary, in President Edwards's writings, the following passage, as part of an elaborate argu-

ment, to prove that future punishments will be eternal:—"If," he says, "we saw a proportion between the evil of sin and eternal punishment,—if we saw something in wicked men that should appear as hateful to us as eternal misery appears dreadful, something that should as much stir up indignation and detestation, as eternal misery does terror, all objections against this doctrine would vanish at once. Though now it seems incredible, though now when the idea of such a degree and duration of torments as are held forth in this doctrine, and think what eternity is, it is ready to seem impossible that such torments should be inflicted on poor, feeble creatures by a Creator of infinite mercy,—yet this arises from these two causes:—first, it is so contrary to the depraved inclinations of mankind, that they hate to believe it, and cannot bear it should be true. Secondly, they see not the suitableness of eternal punishment to the evil of sin; they see not that it is no more than proportionable to the merit of sin."

No one, I should suppose, can read this extract from the writings of President Edwards, and, after having done so, doubt his unreserved adherence to, his firm faith in, the doctrine of never-ending misery in a future state.

Some of the opponents of the eternity of future punishments almost, if not altogether,

claim Dr. Isaac Watts as one who shared their views ; or at least, class him among those whose opinions in favour of the unending misery of the wicked, were the least confident in the truth of the latter doctrine. Mr. Dobney, in his work "On the Scripture doctrine of Punishment," after putting the question, "Have not some of the most profoundly and piously thoughtful been the least confident of the doctrine of never-ending torment?" proceeds in a foot-note, to quote the following passage from the preface of Dr. Watts, to his volume, "The World to Come":—"If the blessed God should, at any time, in a consistence with his glory and incomprehensible perfections, release those wretched creatures from their acute pains and long imprisonment in hell, either with a design of the utter destruction of their being by annihilation, or to put them into some unknown world upon a new foot of trial, I think I ought cheerfully and joyfully to accept this appointment of God"—and who would not?—"for the good of millions of my fellow creatures, and add my joys and praises to all the songs and triumphs of the heavenly world in the day of such a divine and glorious release of these prisoners. I have italicised the first word of this passage.

That small word, "if," in many cases—cer-

tainly, in no conceivable case more than in this—makes a difference too important to be estimated. In the case of Dr. Watts, it would suffice to satisfy us, even had we no corroborative evidence, that he did not believe either in the ultimate restoration or annihilation of those who in the day of judgment shall be consigned to the abodes of perdition. But Dr. Watts removes, in some after observations, all doubts as to what his views were on the duration of punishments in the world to come. He explicitly states that he does not see any scriptural ground to believe that there will be a cessation to the torments of the lost. But even after this, Mr. Dobney would fain cling to the belief that Dr. Watts had hopes, if not a conviction, that there will, at some period or other in eternity, however remote that period may be, be a termination to the miseries of the lost. This notion of Mr. Dobney's is grounded on one solitary expression employed by Dr. Watts. That expression is—"I am constrained, therefore, to leave these unhappy creatures"—those consigned to the regions below—"under the chains of everlasting darkness into which they have cast themselves by their wilful iniquities, *till the blessed God shall see fit to release them.*"

The italics are Mr. Dobney's, not Dr. Watts's.

The expression is neither explicit nor happy ; but no one who takes into consideration the whole of what Dr. Watts says on the subject, could for a moment suppose that it was meant to convey his belief that there would be limits to the duration of the sufferings of the ungodly in a future state. All that Dr. Watts obviously meant was, that he saw no ground whatever to believe in the eventual release of the lost from ruin for ever, and that therefore their destiny must be left in the hands of God. But it is strange, it is indeed hardly fair as a matter of argument, that Mr. Dobney should have quoted the words in question as justifying the belief that Dr. Watts rejected the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments, when, in the beginning of the very same sentence, he says :—“ I am constrained, therefore, to leave these unhappy creatures under the chains of *everlasting darkness*.” No words could more forcibly express the conviction of Dr. Watts, or of any one else, that the torments of the lost will be of endless duration.

The late Robert Hall has likewise been claimed as one of their number, by those who reject the doctrine of endless misery. It is surprising that any one acquainted with Mr. Hall's works, could have come to the conclusion that he believed in the limited duration of future

punishments. His writings abound with statements to the contrary, some of them as direct as language could make them. Others are indirect, yet so explicit as that no intelligent person could have the slightest doubt as to what his faith was on the question. I have just turned to his celebrated sermon on the death, in 1819, of the Princess Charlotte, and find in that sermon no fewer than two emphatic recognitions of the endlessness of the misery of the lost in a future state. In one place Mr. Hall says:—“*Eternity*, it is not surely necessary to remind you, invests every state, whether of bliss, or of *suffering*, with a mystery and awful importance entirely its own; and as the only property in the creation, which gives that weight and moment to whatever it attaches, compared to which all sublunary joys and sorrows, all interests *which know a period*, fade into the most contemptible insignificance.” Again, we hear Mr. Hall saying:—“But it is time to draw the veil over this heart-withering prospect, remembering only what manner of persons we ought to be who are walking on the brink of eternity, and possess no assurance but that the next moment will carry us to the regions of happiness or of *despair*.” These are passages from a single sermon, which ought, of themselves, to be decisive respecting

Mr. Hall's sentiments with regard to the duration of future punishments.

The only passage in Mr. Hall's published writings in which he ever said anything which could be tortured into a statement that the evidence in favour of eternal punishments is defective, was one which occurs in a letter of his, published in Ryland's "Life and Correspondence of John Foster." What Mr. Hall said was simply this:—"The evidence accompanying the popular interpretation, namely, 'the eternity of future punishments,' is by no means to be compared to that which establishes our common Christianity, and, therefore, the fate of the Christian religion is not to be considered as implicated in the belief or disbelief of the popular doctrine." This is a very different thing from saying that the evidence in favour of the endless duration of future punishments was feeble or defective. But we are not left to our inferences on the point. Mr. Hall in the very same part of his published works, in which the passage I have transferred to my pages occurs, expresses in the most explicit terms his full faith in the doctrine of eternal punishments, "For my own part," he says, "I acquiesce in the usual and popular interpretation of the passages which treat on the future doom of the finally impenitent.

My reasons are brief, as follows." And then he proceeds to adduce several of the passages of Scripture which most clearly enunciate, and most emphatically affirm, the eternity of punishments in a future state. Afterwards he adds:—"If the milder interpretation can be sustained by preponderating evidence, I shall most sincerely rejoice." And who, let me ask, would not? "But," he adds, "*I have yet* seen nothing to satisfy me that this is the case." This, it must be admitted, would settle the question of Mr. Hall's opinion on the subject, if a doubt still existed in relation to it.

Some of those who deny the doctrine of the endless duration of the punishment of the finally impenitent in a future state, say that the late Rev. Dr. Chalmers, the friend and contemporary of Mr. Hall, had at least some misgivings as to the fact of future punishments being eternal in their duration. The statement is wholly groundless. Never did any man more fully and more firmly believe in the truth of any doctrine than did Dr. Chalmers in the unending duration of future punishments. I might quote largely from his "*Notes on Hall's Lectures on Divinity*," in confirmation of this; but I will content myself with one brief extract from his writings on the point. "On the subject," he says, "addressing

the students of divinity under his care—"on the subject of the eternity of future punishments, I do not want you to hold with me the language of a stern dogmatist ; but sure I am that the cause of practical religion will suffer greatly in your hands, if you gloss over or reduce the plain literalities of Scripture on the above question. We cannot hesitate a moment as to what the distinct understanding of every plain unsophisticated man must be in regard to the sense and doctrine of the Bible on the matter at issue. The Scripture gives us *no warrant to believe* that our *all* is not staked, and irrevocably staked, on the faith and obedience of the present life."

Those who reject the doctrine of future punishments are almost without exception proud to claim as one who shared their views, the late John Foster. I admit that that great man and profound thinker, had doubts as to the doctrine that the finally impenitent will be eternally punished hereafter for the sins they committed in this world. But if all the circumstances connected with Mr. Foster's entertaining those doubts as to the eternal duration of suffering in the regions below were known, it would be seen that his leanings in favour of a limited duration of punishments were not entitled to much consideration. In answer to a letter

written to a young minister of the gospel, who asked for his views in relation to the duration of future punishments, he commenced in these words:—"If you could have been apprised how much less research I have made into what has been written on the subject of your letter than you appear to have done, you would have had little expectation of assistance in deciding your judgment. I have perhaps been too content to let an *opinion*, or *impression*, admitted in early life, dispense with protracted inquiry and various reading. The general, not very far short of universal, judgment of divines in affirmation of the doctrine of eternal punishment, must be acknowledged a weighty consideration. It is a very fair question,—Is it likely that so many thousands of able, learned, benevolent, and pious men should all have been in error? And the language of Scripture is *formidably strong*; so *strong* that it must be an argument of extreme cogency that would authorize a limited interpretation."

The italics, it is right I should state, are mine. I give them with the view of placing it beyond all question, that Mr. Foster was not a decided believer in the limited duration of future punishments. His mind was simply in a state of uncertainty on the subject. The advocates of the

non-eternity of the punishment reserved in a future state for the finally impenitent, have therefore no right to claim him as an unqualified believer in, and unconditional supporter of, their theory. His views could not be more fully described than in the sentence which follows the quotation I have just made from his writings on the subject. That sentence is this, the italics being Mr. Foster's own:—"Nevertheless, I acknowledge myself not *convinced* of the orthodox doctrine,"—the doctrine, namely, of the endless duration of future punishments. Mr. Foster then goes on to give his reasons at considerable length why he is not convinced of the truth of "the orthodox doctrine." These, it is of the utmost importance to bear in mind, are almost exclusively founded on what he regards as a thing altogether unlike a benevolent Being, such as God is, that He should doom his creatures to endure an eternity of inconceivable woe for sins committed during a brief period of existence in this world. With that argument, as advanced and urged by others, I will hereafter deal. So far as relates to the bearing of the Scriptures on the subject, Mr. Foster only devotes a very brief space to that phase of the question. In fact, so far as relates to direct scriptural teaching he gives only a few sentences. He begins by admit-

ting the gravity of the question—"What say the Scriptures?" and, he adds, "There is a *force* in their expression at which *we may well tremble*. On *no* allowable interpretation do they signify less than a very protracted duration and a formidable severity. But," he adds, "I hope it is not presumptuous to take advantage of the fact, that the terms everlasting, eternal, for ever, original or translated, are often employed in the Bible as well as other writings, under great and various limitations of import, and are thus withdrawn from the predicament of necessarily and absolutely meaning a strictly endless duration." This is the sum and substance of Mr. Foster's reasons derived from the Scriptures for not believing in the eternity of future punishments. I do trust that I have in previous chapters proved to the satisfaction of those who have read what I have written on this phase of the question, that such arguments do not possess the force necessary to produce conviction adverse to the doctrine of eternal punishments to the minds of those who are thoroughly conversant with the Scriptures, and not prejudiced by partiality for some previously embraced hypothesis.

Dean Alford is another of those eminent men in modern times, whom the advocates of a limited duration of future punishments claim as one who

shares their views. Dean Alford has much to answer for on the score of grave doctrinal errors, which he has assiduously laboured, and with too much success, to spread in the country. His loose views with reference to the inspiration of the Scriptures, and various other worse than Rationalistic sentiments to which he has given the sanction of his name in the *Contemporary Review*, of which he is the avowed editor, have done incalculable injury to the cause of the religion of Christ. To these matters I shall advert in an after part of this work. But because he is lamentably in error on some points, a sense of justice demands that I should not allow him to be misrepresented or misconceived on other momentous matters. One expression which occurs in his commentary on the forty-first, forty-second, and forty-third verses of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's gospel, has led some persons to conclude that the Dean does not believe in the eternity of future punishments. "There is," he there says, "no hell for man; because the blood of Jesus hath purchased life for all." These words would rather seem to sanction, if they stood alone, the doctrine that there will be no future punishment, but that all will be saved, either at death or at the general judgment; but if, instead of reading

the sentence detached from what goes before and follows after, we read it in its connection, it will be found that, so far from giving countenance to the doctrine of the limited duration of future misery, it broadly and emphatically asserts the eternity of the punishment which will be inflicted on the ungodly in the world to come.

The very next sentence runs thus :—“But they who will serve the devil must share with him in the end ;” and what the devil’s doom is to be, is described in a preceding sentence. “The fire,” says Dean Alford, “is prepared for the devil and his angels.” That particular fire is *eternal* fire. Then, referring to the momentous transactions recorded, by anticipation, by our Lord, in the forty-fourth and forty-fifth verses of the same chapter, Dean Alford proceeds thus :—“The sublimity of this description surpasses all imagination. Christ, as the Son of Man, the Shepherd, the King, the Judge, as the centre and end of all human love, bringing out and rewarding his talent grace in those who have lived in love, *everlastingly punishing* those who have quenched it in an unloving and selfish life, and in the accomplishment of his mediatorial office, causing even from out of the iniquities of a rebellious world his sovereign mercy to rejoice

against judgment." Surely language like this, so explicit and so decided, ought ever afterwards to protect Dean Alford from the charge of not being a believer in the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments. Most heartily do I wish that the Dean were as sound on all other points of Divine truth as on this very solemn subject.

THE DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENTS.

PART SECOND.

THE disbelief in the eternity of future punishments has made astounding progress of late in the pulpits and the theological press of this country. Twenty-five years ago there was only one clergyman in the Church of England in the metropolis, who was known, not only to entertain the idea that punishment in the world to come would not be eternal, but openly to proclaim his conviction that future punishment would be of limited duration. That one solitary exception was in the person of the late Rev. Mr. Denham, rector of St. Mary's, Strand, and evening lecturer at St. Bride's, Fleet Street. But no one who was acquainted with him would have been surprised at his adopting any opinions. I, myself, heard him deliver a sermon, the sole object of which was to prove that it was out of pure affection for Christ—not, as the Scriptures tell us, from the love of money—that Judas betrayed

our Lord. He drank deeply from the fountain of a German semi-infidelity; and from all that I knew of him, I should not have been surprised at his adopting any notion, no matter what might be its nature. I further well remember him who was at that time my beloved pastor, the late Rev. James Harington Evans, of John Street Chapel, Bedford Row—a man whose memory I will ever hold in the most profound veneration—expressing his holy horror at the thought that any man could be found in a pulpit of the Establishment to deny the doctrine of eternal punishments, and to preach the limited duration of the sufferings of the lost in the world to come. What would Mr. Evans, one of the holiest men I ever knew, have thought had he lived to the present time, and ascertained the fearful fact, placed beyond all doubt, that there are vast numbers, both in the pulpits of the Church of England and in those of the Independent and Baptist bodies, who do not only not believe in the eternity of future punishments, but in private make admissions to that effect. To this deplorable fact I will have occasion to recur. Not much more than twelve months have elapsed since Mr. Charles Marshall, minister of the Baptist Chapel, Grafton Street, Fitzroy Square, resigned his pastoral charge over that church and congregation, solely because he

could no longer believe in, and consequently no longer preach, the doctrine of eternal punishments. He forwarded to me a printed circular, assigning the change which his views had undergone on that subject, as the only reason why he resigned his pastorate in Grafton Street Chapel. While I state this fact, it is due to Mr. Marshall to say that, though deeply regretting the error into which he has fallen, I cannot but admire his honesty in ceasing to be the pastor of a people to whom he could no longer preach an important doctrine which he had formerly taught, and in which as a church, and congregation, they believed. Were all the occupants of our pulpits in the churches and chapels throughout the country who share Mr. Marshall's belief in the non-eternity of future punishments, to act honestly up, as he did, to their convictions, the number of resignations of ministerial charges which would consequently take place would fill the world with amazement.

It is a soul-saddening fact that there should be such large numbers, both in the Church of England and in the two Congregational denominations, who in their hearts repudiate the doctrine of eternal punishments, and never preach it in their pulpits, and yet continue to retain their positions as ministers of the Gospel among those who have no sympathy with their views on the

point. In saying this, I am only stating what is beyond all controversy in the views of those who have paid any attention to the subject. So late as the first day of the present month, the *Pall Mall Gazette* broadly and boldly affirmed that, among the ranks of the younger ministers, both in the Independent and Baptist bodies, the views of Mr. Maurice, on religious questions, are very prevalent, and we all know that the chief principle of his creed—that on which he especially prides himself—is the doctrine of ultimate universal restoration, and therefore, of necessity, that of the non-eternity of future punishments. The *English Independent*, the recognized weekly organ of the Congregational body, replied at great length to the article of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in which this assertion appeared, but did not deny its accuracy. There is therefore a fearful prospect before the Nonconformist Churches of Great Britain.

Then, again, if we leave the pulpits of the land, and advert to what is called the theological press of the country, we shall find the same state of things existing. I could name, but I will not, various leading periodicals circulating among readers who call themselves evangelical, in which the doctrine of eternal punishments is not only never by any chance even indirectly recognized, much less directly inculcated as a portion of Divine

truth. I hold that this is dishonest. The great majority of the readers of the religious periodicals to which I allude subscribe to them in the belief that the doctrine of never-ending punishments is part of their theological programme. Such readers are in consequence deceived. The fact that nothing is said in the magazines to which I refer, in opposition to the doctrine of eternal punishments, does not mend the matter. The truth can be, and often is, as much sacrificed by being ignored, as when it is openly and fiercely assailed. The unfaithfulness in the one case is practically as great as in the other. It no less suffers, if it does not perish, in the house of its professed but in reality unfaithful friends, than it does in the house of its avowed enemies.

Before I proceed to the more argumentative part of the question, as to whether or not future punishments are to be eternal, it may be right to remark that those who deny their eternity are altogether at variance among themselves as to what is to be the period of their duration. Mr. Winchester, the ablest of English opponents of eternal punishments during the latter part of last century, believed that future punishments would not only be caused by literal fire, but that they would be prolonged for an indefinite period. One of his expressions was, that the ungodly, dying in

a state of impenitence, would be doomed to “welter in the flames of hell fire for ages on ages.” In the year 1792 a Mr. Philip Burton published a work in which he undertook to specify the very number of years during which the punishment of the wicked in the world to come would last. He fixed the period of their duration at 14,400 years—not one year more nor less. This was a brief period compared with that which the opponents of eternal punishments generally assign. But I myself once heard a Unitarian minister, a man, too, of cultivated intellect, assign a much shorter time. He fixed on the period as destined, in his conviction, to be from two thousand to three thousand years. He would not venture to be more specific than that. By what process of reasoning the opponents of eternal punishments arrive at the conclusion that they can assign the precise period of their duration, or even make any approximation to it, I have never been able to comprehend. Nor have any of them, so far as I can learn from reading their works, or hearing them preach, ever furnished data whereby we could form an opinion on the point.

The Jews, I ought to observe, have a theory as to the duration of punishments, which comprehends both their eternity and non-eternity in the world to come. On the one hand they believe

that infidels, and all persons eminently wicked, will be consigned to the abodes of eternal perdition, or, in other words, for ever remain in hell. On the other hand, they no less firmly hold that no Jew who has not been infected with some heresy, or has not acted contrary to the points mentioned by the rabbis as constituting the essentials of the Jewish faith and practice, will, though sentenced to hell, remain there, or be in any other way punished, for a longer period than a year, at the most.

Let me, now that I am beginning the discussion, ask those who may, in the providence of God, be led to read what I shall have to submit for their consideration, to endeavour to divest their minds of all prejudices against, and all prepossessions in favour of, particular opinions relative to the momentous question which we are about to consider. Let them earnestly desire that He, who is the Truth as well as the Life, may lead both themselves and him whose words they are about to read, into all truth, on the very solemn subject which now invites our most serious consideration. Let both readers and writer approach the subject in that reverential spirit and with that singleness of desire to be conducted to right conclusions upon it, which its paramount importance has a right to demand at

our hands. Let each and all of us remember that if it be the mind of the Spirit that we should discern the doctrine of eternal punishment in the Word of God, and we yet come to the opposite conclusion, the consequence of our mistake will be awful in the extreme,—more frightful than any mind can conceive.

Let me then say at the outset, that IT IS MY FIRM CONVICTION THAT THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT IS MOST CLEARLY REVEALED IN THE BIBLE. Were the best of God's people to confer only with their own feelings, they would, for the sake of others, most earnestly wish it were not true. It is terrible to think that all who die in their present state have no prospect before them but "a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries"—"devour" them eternally. But we must not in this, nor in any other case where the utterances of Scripture are clear, consult our own feelings. They must be put entirely in abeyance. The great question with us must be, "What saith the Scriptures?" as the only and accredited exponent of the mind of the Spirit.

I begin, then, by repeating that the Bible gives no uncertain sound on the subject. I maintain that its utterances are both explicit and frequent as to the eternity of the punish-

ments which are reserved for the ungodly in the world to come. I further affirm that the language of Scripture is not only clear and conclusive in favour of this awful doctrine, but that many most important truths are generally received among Christians belonging to the various evangelical denominations, which are not so plainly, so frequently, and in such varied forms of phraseology taught, as the doctrine that the punishment in a future state of those who die in their sins will be as lasting—in other words, endless,—as the happiness of saints and angels in heaven.

Let us therefore listen to some of the utterances of God's holy oracles on the point. And first of all, it will be the better course, with a view to our learning the mind of the Spirit on the subject, that we quote and examine the force, or otherwise, of the arguments which the advocates of the non-eternity of future punishments urge in favour of their view. I feel that I will be doing the greatest justice to the advocates of the theory that future punishments will *not* be eternal, by giving the passages of Scripture which they adduce as presented by the Rev. Dr. Chauncey, an American divine, who lived about the middle of last century. He is, till this day, regarded by those who do not believe in the eternal duration of future punishment, as the

ablest advocate of that hypothesis which either of the two hemispheres has produced. That he was so regarded in America in the middle of the last century might be inferred from the fact, even had we no other proof on the point, that the Rev. Dr. Edwards, son of the celebrated President Edwards, one of the most distinguished theologians of any age or country, thought it necessary to reply to Dr. Chauncey's book, entitled, "The Salvation of All Men." As I mentioned the name of Dr. Chauncey in a previous paper in the category of Universalists, it is right I should here make an explanatory remark or two. He may be said to have held two creeds,—the one, that of Destruction; the other, that of Universal Restoration. He appeared to be most in love with the Annihilation theory; but he distinctly stated that he held that of Universal Restoration at the same time, lest the Destruction hypothesis might peradventure fail him. This is a strange state of mind to be in for any one holding a high position in the theological world. It appears to me that a man who could thus have embraced two creeds—in some respects essentially different—being able to assign no other reason for the comprehensiveness of his faith but the wish to have two alternative systems of belief, lest one

should fail him,—is not one who had any claim to be regarded as an authority in the religious world.

But I put that consideration aside altogether. It has no immediate relation to the question whether future punishments will or will not be eternal. His repudiation of the doctrine of never-ending punishments in the world to come is equally in accordance with the Annihilation or Restoration theory ; and as Dr. Chauncey is alike regarded by the advocates and opponents of the eternity of future punishments, as the ablest that has written on the non-eternity side of the question, I proceed at once to examine the positions which he advances and the portions of Scripture which he adduces in support of his views.

Dr. Chauncey lays down as his first proposition that Christ died for all men, and that consequently all mankind must ultimately cease to be kept in a state of misery. Of course, if that be true, future punishments cannot be eternal. Dr. Chauncey's first scriptural quotation in favour of the proposition that Christ died for all, is the sixth verse of the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. In that verse St. Paul says, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." It is as plain as any truth can be, that

so far from proving that Christ died for the whole world, this passage does not even give a presumptive sanction to the idea. It is not said that Christ died for *all* the ungodly, but simply for the ungodly. The obvious meaning of the verse is either that Christ died for such of the ungodly as will be saved, or that He died that the ungodly, taking them in the aggregate, might be saved; not that all the ungodly will be saved. I believe the first interpretation of the passage to be the one which was primarily, if not exclusively, in the mind of the Apostle; for it will be remembered that the whole of the Epistle is directed to those believers in Christ who were in Rome. The chapter had a special reference to the saints of God. It opens with the assertion of the great doctrine that he himself and those whom he addressed were justified by faith in Christ. "Therefore," he says, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." There is not, therefore, I repeat, anything either in the particular passage quoted by Dr. Chauncey and those other advocates of the non-eternity of future punishments who have followed him, nor in the scope of the chapter,

which affords even the semblance of support to the doctrine of the ultimate universal salvation of mankind.

The next Scriptural quotation which Dr. Chauncey makes, taking his quotations chronologically, in opposition to the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments, is the twenty-ninth verse of the first chapter of the Gospel by St. John: "Behold," says John the Baptist, on seeing Jesus coming unto him—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The passage cannot, except by a forced construction, be pressed into the service of those who advocate the doctrine of the universal salvation, at some period or other, of the human race. The word "world," I admit, does in various parts of Scripture signify the "whole human race;" but in many instances it admits of no such construction. In numerous cases the term is used as if it only were applicable to the people of God. It is so in the eighteenth and nineteenth verses of the fifth chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, where it is said, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed

unto us the word of reconciliation.” Those who are reconciled to God, or are in the course of being so, are here said to be the world. As regards them, therefore, it may be said, with a special propriety, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” But not to multiply proofs that the word “world” does not always mean the whole of Adam’s posterity, but frequently signifies a very limited number, compared with all mankind, I would refer to two out of several passages of Scripture which place this beyond all doubt. First of all, we read in the nineteenth verse of the twelfth chapter of the Gospel by St. John, that the world had gone after Christ. Now we know that those who did on this occasion follow our Lord for the purpose of listening to his utterances were only a portion of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the place in which He happened to be at this time. Again, in the eighth verse of the first chapter of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle says of those who constituted the Church in the city of Rome, that their faith was spoken of through the whole world. No one who knows anything of the early or subsequent history of Christianity will ever take this language in its literal sense as either signifying at the time it was written that the faith of the members of the

Church at Rome was even known to the whole world, much less spoken of with admiration. So far from such being the fact, even the name of Christ was not at this particular period known to one out of a thousand of the world's inhabitants.

I hold, therefore, that no one has a right to build on the passage in question a system of universal redemption. The language of John the Baptist simply means that Christ, in his character of the Lamb of God, will take away the sin of as many of the men and women in the world as shall believe in Him. This is placed beyond all doubt, if language can place a thing beyond doubt, by the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth verses of the third chapter of the same Gospel. "And," says the Evangelist, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth in Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already,

because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." In the fifteenth verse it is expressly declared that he who believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have eternal life, According, therefore, to all the admitted rules of reasoning, he who does not believe in Christ shall perish eternally, inasmuch as he shall not have everlasting life. But lest some one should still feel unsatisfied on this point, and cherish the latent belief that all the world will be ultimately saved, it is added in the sixteenth verse, "God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here, again, the great doctrine is taught, in language the most explicit, that he only who believeth in Christ shall be saved. For him alone the Lord Jesus died,—he alone shall have everlasting life. Not one of those who do not believe shall be saved not one shall have everlasting life. That this limited salvation is perfectly compatible with those portions of Scripture which refer to Christ's having been made a propitiation for the sin of the world, or his having come to save the world, not to condemn it, is a point which is conclusively proved by the language of our Lord in relation to guilty Jerusalem, when he wept over that city's inhabitants. "And when," we are told, "He

was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ; but now they are hid from thine eyes !’ ” He would have saved their city and themselves, but they would not be saved ; and therefore the destruction of their city and themselves was the consequence. And just, as we know, that Jerusalem was destroyed and what terrible calamities befell its inhabitants,—though Christ would have averted its doom and theirs, had they received Him when He came unto them,—so sinners whom our Lord would save if they would only accept his salvation, will as certainly perish eternally as did the inhabitants of Jerusalem temporally, because it was true of them, that Jesus came unto his own, and his own received him not. It is just the same in relation to spiritual things. God is not willing, neither is Christ willing, that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance ; but rebellious men are willing, and not only willing, but determined, judging from their conduct, that they shall perish. God, therefore, leaves them to themselves, and they do perish eternally, just as the inhabitants of Jerusalem perished in a temporal sense, because they disregarded the warning voice of Christ, and would not repent

and believe the Gospel. From this passage of Scripture, therefore, the doctrine of the ultimate salvation of all mankind, and the consequent cessation of future punishments, derives no countenance whatever.

Feebler still is the support to the notion of a limited duration of future punishments assumed to be afforded in that other passage of Scripture in the sixth verse of the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which Dr. Chauncey quotes. "For," says the Apostle Paul, "when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." As all are ungodly both by nature and practice, those for whom Christ died must, of necessity, have belonged to that category. But the passage in question gives no countenance to the notion that Christ died, in the saving sense of the term, for *all* the ungodly. It is surprising that any one could imagine that he could see an end to the future punishments of the guilty in this passage of Scripture, because in the next verse but one, which is evidently a continuation of the Apostle's argument, Paul says, "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for *us*." So that in reality our Lord's death was not for all, but for those who believed in Him; it consequently follows that those who

are not of “us,” will never be saved, because Christ did not die for them.

This view of the salvation which Christ came into the world to work out, is strikingly enforced by the very next quotation from Scripture which Dr. Chauncey makes against the doctrine of eternal punishments, grounded on his assumption that all mankind will eventually be saved. The passage to which I allude is the third verse of the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians: “For,” says the Apostle, “I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for *our* sins according to the Scriptures.” Paul not only was a Christian, but the greatest, perhaps, in some respects, the world ever witnessed, or ever will witness; and when he employs the words, “Christ died for our sins,” he is addressing those believers in Jesus who were members of the Church at Corinth,—which, notwithstanding all the error and all the defects by which that church was characterized, did consist of a company of believers in Christ. Indeed, he expressly says, in the two preceding verses, that they had received, and stood in the Gospel which he had preached unto them, and by which they were saved, unless they believed in vain, which—from various other parts of this and the subsequent Epistle to the same Church of Corinth

—we know not to have been the case. This quotation, then, of Dr. Chauncey, is altogether irrelevant to the question at issue, namely, the limited duration of future punishments and universal restoration.

The Doctor's next argument against eternal punishment, one which is adopted by all Universalists in the interval of nearly one hundred years which has taken place since his day, is grounded on the tenth verse of the fifth chapter of the first Epistle to the Thessalonians. Speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul there says, "Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him."

I know not how sufficiently to express my surprise that a distinguished divine and able controversialist could fancy he discerned here the doctrine of universal restoration and consequent non-eternity of future punishments. It would be impossible to set forth the fact in more explicit language, than it is exclusively of the people of God, or of believers in Christ, that the Apostle, here speaks, than is done in the previous portion of the chapter. "Ye are," he says to the members of the Thessalonian Church—"Ye are the children of light, and the children of the day;" "for God," he adds, identifying himself as a disciple of Christ with the Thessalonian believers

in Jesus—"for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." It was for them only, not for all mankind, that Christ died in the saving sense of the word. "Who died for us!" for *us*, who have been converted by the grace of God, and who are sanctified by the indwelling in our hearts of the Holy Spirit. For such and for none others, does Paul here say that Christ died. So far, therefore, from the Universalists finding here an argument for their theory of the ultimate salvation of all mankind, and a consequent limit to the duration of future punishment, it constitutes if taken by itself, an unanswerable argument against it. If the Apostle says that Christ died for believers alone—and that is the obvious meaning of his words—it follows as an inevitable inference, that those who are not believers must perish eternally, even according to the Universalist creed, for it is an essential part of that creed, that there is no salvation for a single sinner but through the sufferings and death of Christ.

The next text of Scripture which Dr. Chauncey quotes as proving the doctrine of universal salvation, and as being consequently at irreconcilable variance with what the Universalists call the dogma of eternal punishment, is that which con-

stitutes the ninth verse of the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In that portion of Scripture it is said, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." First of all, let it be remembered that the author of that Epistle was addressing himself throughout as a Christian to Christians, and consequently the presumption would be that, when he speaks of Jesus tasting death for every man, he meant for every believer in Him whom the inspired penman addressed. But we are not left to rest our case against universal salvation, and a consequent limited duration of future punishment, on a conclusion to which Universalists might object. We have other evidence, from the chapter in which the verse I have quoted occurs, in proof of the fact that the Apostle was speaking of the people of God when he used the expression, "tasted death for every man," which I hold to be decisive. I cannot indeed conceive even a plausible argument against my conviction, that it is the disciples of Christ to whom the Apostle refers, when he says that Christ tasted death for every man. That seems to me to be the scope of the entire chapter; but it is brought out more clearly

in some parts than in others. In the words which immediately precede the phrase, "tasted death for every man," we find, in the tenth verse, that Christ is represented as bringing, by his sufferings and death, "many sons unto glory." No one can predicate of the ungodly that they are "sons" whom Christ is bringing unto glory. Besides, the very words, "many sons," in the passage, is fatal to the theory of ultimate universal salvation. "Many" cannot be regarded as equivalent to "all," whereas the Universalist hypothesis embraces the *whole* of the human race, not even excepting Judas himself.

The eleventh verse appears to me to be no less explicit in its utterances on the subject. "For," it is said, "both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." What could be more clear from this verse than the fact that it is for those who are here united to Christ by faith in and are sanctified by Him—not that will believe and be sanctified at some remote period in eternity—that Christ is said to have tasted death? There is, I admit, another and more comprehensive sense in which Jesus may be said to have tasted death for every man. I allude to the fact that in his death there is merit

enough to save every sinner under heaven. But unless sinners repent and believe the Gospel, unless they lay hold of Christ by an appropriating faith, they not only will never be benefited by the atonement of Christ, but their doom will be more terrible in the world to come, just because they would not accept the salvation provided for them by the obedience, the sufferings, and the death of Christ.

Dr. Chauncey, as the accredited representative of Universalism, says, under a third classification of his proofs in opposition to eternal punishment, that, "as a means in order to men's being made meet for salvation, God will, sooner or later, in this state or another, reduce them all under a willing and obedient subjection to his moral government. In proof of this his first Scripture quotation is from the sixth verse of the eighth Psalm, "Thou madest," says David, speaking of Christ—"Thou madest Him to have dominion over all the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his feet."

From this Dr. Chauncey and the Universalists, as a body, infer that at some period or other in the world to come, all the ungodly in the abodes of perdition, will be ultimately brought to love and obey God, and consequently be saved. That is a strange inference from the text. I should

have supposed it simply meant that Christ will ultimately triumph over Satan and all the powers of darkness, and reign supreme throughout God's boundless universe. I regard the verse just quoted as simply meaning, in the words of the Church of England, that Christ will ultimately bruise Satan under the feet of believers, or that all in the regions below will be brought into coerced, though not willing, subjection to Him who is Lord of all.

The next quotation from Scripture, advanced in proof of the position under the head in question, that all men will sooner or later be saved, and that, consequently future punishments will not be eternal,—is the twenty-first verse of the first chapter of the Gospel by Matthew. Speaking of Mary, the Evangelist says, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for He shall save his people from their sins.” Is it not passing strange that this text should be quoted as constituting a proof in favour of ultimate universal salvation, and therefore against the eternal duration of future punishments? On the very face of the passage, it proves just the reverse. It is Christ's people, or those who believe in Him, who alone are to be saved. No Universalist will, I presume, affirm that all mankind are the people of Christ, or

believers in Him ; and for such as are not there can be no salvation, so long as they remain in a state of unbelief. The passage gives not the slightest intimation of all mankind becoming in the end the people or the disciples of Christ, and therefore it does not give even the semblance of a sanction to the notion that sooner or later all will become Christ's people, and consequently be saved.

The next passage of Scripture adduced by Dr. Chauncey to prove that means will be found, whereby the punishment of those consigned to the regions below will be terminated, and they restored to holiness and happiness, is the passage in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, beginning with the twenty-fourth and ending with the twenty-ninth verses. "Then," the Apostle says, "cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under his feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him

then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him; that God may be all in all. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?—why are they then baptized for the dead?” I do not believe that there is any portion of Scripture which is of more certain interpretation than this. The great purpose of the Apostle in the chapter is to prove that there will be a resurrection of the dead. Death itself is then—that is, at the general resurrection—to be destroyed. The Apostle goes no farther than that, but the Universalists admit that there may be periods of punishment extending through many ages after the resurrection. The passage therefore does not at all bear on the subject. Let it be also remembered that all things are to be put under the feet of Christ at the general resurrection. Are the Universalists prepared to acquiesce in these words of the Apostle? Then they are bound in consistency to acknowledge that there is no future punishment at all; for punishment, which necessarily involves sin, cannot co-exist with the willing subjugation of all things to Christ. All things will indeed be subjugated to Christ after the general resurrection. Satan himself will then be cast into the bottomless pit, and the smoke of the torments of those

who died in their sins will for ever ascend up from their dismal abodes ; but surely that is not the willing subjugation to which Universalists tell us all who will be consigned to the regions of the lost will be eventually brought. It is the coerced subjugation of enemies who have been vanquished by irresistible Divine power.

Another great argument urged by the Universalists, and others who do not denominationally belong to that body, against the eternity of future punishments, is the passage in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, beginning with the ninth and ending with the eleventh verses. “ Wherefore,” says Paul, “ God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name : that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” I can here discern no evidence that there will, in a future state, be a termination to the punishment of the ungodly. The language of the Apostle simply means that Christ Jesus is Lord of all, and that as He is supreme over all the intelligent beings in the universe, the universe ought to bow down before Him, and at the mere mention of his name reverentially recognize his

supremacy. There is, I ought to add, a sense in which all do acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as supreme in the illimitable empire of Jehovah. The devils, we are told, were in the days of his flesh made subject unto Him. They addressed Him as Divine, and prayed that He might not torment them before the time. But there was no evidence or indication in the homage which devils thus paid to Christ when on earth, that theirs was the language of love, or a proof of their restoration to holiness and happiness. We know that, on the contrary, it was the very reverse. It was simply an exemplification of what we elsewhere read respecting the devils, namely, that they believe and tremble. So far from being restored or saved, they remain devils still, and not one word is to be found in either of the passages in which reference is made to the devils, which gives the slightest countenance to the idea that one of their number—not even *one*—will ever be saved. It will just be as true in eternity as it was in the days of our Saviour's sojourn in this world, that, though the devils believe that Christ is the Son of God, they yet tremble. They believe in Him as a Saviour, but not as *their* Saviour; and without this faith in Christ there never can be in the world to come, any more than there can be in the world

that now is, salvation for any rebellious intelligent creature. But that is a point on which I will not now dwell. It is an aspect of the question so very important, that I shall hereafter deem it my duty to direct especial attention to it.

The fourth proposition which Dr. Chauncey lays down in favour of universal salvation, and therefore of necessity against the eternity of future punishments, is this:—"The Scripture language concerning the reduced or restored, in consequence of the mediatory interposition of Jesus Christ, is such as leads us into the thought that it is comprehensive of mankind generally. It will seem strange to those who share Dr. Chauncey's views on the subject, as it does to myself, that he is recognized, as I have before remarked, by Universalists generally, as the ablest advocate of the system, should not have been able to quote more than one passage in favour of the proposition in question; or, at all events, has not done so. The passage referred to is in the thirteenth verse of the fifth chapter of Revelation, and is as follows:—"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth

upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

Poole, one of our most distinguished commentators, while not believing with Dr. Clarke in the salvation of the brute creation, and their ultimate introduction into heaven, recognizes the fact, that the literal import of the passage in question is, that praises shall be given to our Lord Jesus Christ by the irrational as well as by the rational creation. But my impression is that Dr. Chauncey, in quoting the Scripture in question as sanctioning Universalism, was not prepared to include within its very comprehensive embraces the ultimate salvation of the brute creation. The brutes, we are elsewhere told, are destined to perish,—that is, that when they die there is nothing more of them, and we hear nothing more of them. Unless, therefore, Dr. Chauncey, and those Universalists of the present day who acknowledge him to be the chief champion of their creed, are prepared to express their belief in the restoration and eternal happiness of the brute creation, they can have no legitimate right to adduce this passage in opposition to the doctrine of eternal punishments. It either, if understood literally, affirms the doctrine of the universal salvation of the irrational creation, as well as of mankind, or it does not give the

slightest sanction to either belief. It cannot be quoted legitimately by Dr. Chauncey, or any of our modern Universalists, as furnishing a proof of the non-eternity of future punishments.

I have thus adverted in a special manner to all the portions of Scripture—taking one by one in detail—which Dr. Chauncey, the great advocate of the non-eternity of future punishments, urges in favour of that feature in their creed. I submit I have succeeded in demonstrating that his notions are wholly groundless, and in proving my own to be true. In my next chapter it will be my purpose to prove that in no circumstances can it be shown that the texts which establish the eternity of punishments in the world to come, can be successfully controverted. If there be meaning in words, I will then show that, awful as the idea is, yet that it is proved in the Bible by the most conclusive evidence, that the punishment of the ungodly in the world to come will be eternal.

THE DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENTS.

PART, THIRD.

IN my previous chapters I have sought to show that the passages of Scripture which those who do not believe in eternal punishments adduce as justifying their rejection of that doctrine, do not warrant the conclusion at which they have arrived. In accordance with the opinions I have before advanced, the duty now devolves upon me to prove, by another course of argument, that the punishments of the wicked in the world to come will never have an end, but will be co-existent with the rewards of the righteous.

Let us then listen with all reverence to what the teaching of the Word of God is on the subject. It would occupy more space than I can spare to examine all the utterances which are to be found in Scripture on the momentous question. Nor will that be necessary. I do trust that, by confining our attention to such passages as speak

with a special plainness and fulness on the subject, I shall be able to make it clear to such as will divest their minds of all prejudices and prepossessions, that God does most emphatically and most explicitly inculcate in his Word, the awfully momentous doctrine, that all those who live and die in their sins, shall, in the language of our Lord, as surely “go away into *everlasting* punishment,” as the righteous “shall go away into life eternal.”

First of all, then, let us examine those passages of Scripture in which the words “eternal” and “everlasting,” and other various terms and combinations of words, occur in connection with the punishments which the ungodly will be subjected to in the world to come,—which terms and phrases, in my judgment, unanswerably prove that their punishment will be of endless duration.

The word “*eternal*,” as applied to the punishment of the wicked, only occurs in two parts of Scripture, namely, in the twenty-ninth verse of the third chapter of the Gospel by Mark, and in the seventh verse of the Epistle of Jude. The first passage in which the word “eternal,” in connection with the punishment of the ungodly in another world, is to be met with, consists of the language of our Lord. Jesus was, on the occasion

in question, addressing Himself to the Scribes relative to various points,—among others, to that of the forgiveness of sins. The only one sin for which there could be no forgiveness was, He told them, the sin against the Holy Ghost. “But He,” the Saviour said, in the twenty-ninth verse of the chapter in question, “that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.” No one, with the exception of the advocates, comparatively few in number, of annihilation of both soul and body at death, to whom I have devoted one of my previous chapters, will question the fact that the “damnation,” spoken of in the verse under consideration, means the punishment which all who die in their sins will have to suffer in the world to come. Well, then, that punishment, or “damnation,” is declared by our Lord to be “eternal.” No less clear is it that the word “eternal” here means a misery which shall never have an end, but shall co-exist with whatever else, in any part of God’s universe, is destined to endure for ever. The parallel passage in the tenth verse of the twelfth chapter of Luke’s Gospel is confirmatory of this view of the question. “Whosoever,” is the language of our Lord, as rendered by the latter Evangelist—“whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of

man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven,"—evidently meaning it shall never be forgiven him. Even when unnumbered and innumerable ages of a future eternity have become a portion of the eternity that is past, the forgiveness of that sin will be as impossible as ever. And if there never can be pardon, there never can be the cessation of punishment. No theologian, no matter what may be the nature of his creed, has ever controverted that point. The fact, therefore, that there is at least *one* sin which will never be pardoned, is fatal to the theory that there will ultimately be a *universal* restoration of mankind to holiness and happiness. And with the subversion of that theory there is, of necessity, the overthrow of the equivalent hypothesis, that there will be limits to the duration of future punishments.

But, clear as is the fact, from the passage under consideration, that the punishment which those who die in their sins will have to endure in a future state, will be of eternal duration, the awful truth is made even more clear in the parallel passage in the thirty-first and thirty-second verses of the twelfth chapter of the Gospel by Matthew. There is an explicitness as well as force in that portion of Scripture on this solemn

subject, which, I hold, could not be surpassed, and which, if the passage were unsupported by any other in the Bible, ought of itself to extort from every reader of it, however unpalatable the doctrine, the conviction that the punishments of the wicked in the world to come will be of eternal duration. “Wherefore,” are the words of our Lord, “I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men,”—that is, will be forgiven to them in this world, if they confess and repent of their sins, and pray for forgiveness,—“but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven them.” That is a plain declaration of the solemn truth that there is at least one sin for which there is no pardon; and if, I repeat, no pardon, there must be unending punishment. But let me, especially, with all the urgency with which I can clothe my words, beseech those who may have fallen into the fatal error of believing in the limited duration of future punishments, and the doctrine of the ultimate universal salvation of mankind, to seek to divest their minds of all prejudices and prepossessions while they read the verse which follows: “And whosoever,” continued our Lord, “speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven

him, *neither in this world, nor in the world to come.*” No language which it were possible to employ could more plainly or more powerfully express, than does the latter clause of this passage, the solemn truth, that in the world to come, any more than in the world that now is, there will be at least one class of sinners that never will be pardoned, and, consequently, never can or will be saved, but whose sins will press upon them, with a weight which cannot be removed, throughout the ages of eternity. Could I but succeed in persuading those who do not believe in the eternity of future punishments, to ponder prayerfully this passage of Scripture, I cannot doubt that a conviction of their error on that momentous point, would be brought home to their minds with a power which they could not resist. They would see with a noon-day clearness that their belief in universal ultimate salvation is wholly at variance with the word of God.

The other part of Scripture to which I have referred, as containing the word “eternal,” in its applicability to future punishments, is, as I have before said, in the seventh verse of the epistle to Jude. In that verse the guilty cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are represented as “set forth for an example”—an example to all the ungodly in every succeeding age—as “suffering

the vengeance of eternal fire.” I am aware that many of our best commentators, who believe firmly in the doctrine of eternal punishments, interpret the phrase, “the vengeance of eternal fire,” as applicable to the material fire from heaven, which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. But they at the same time maintain that the term “eternal” is applied with the strictest propriety to the fire which consumed the cities in question, because it was eternal in its effects. Neither of the two cities ever was, nor ever will be, rebuilt. In that respect, therefore, all our best commentators contend that the destruction by fire of all the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, is a most appropriate emblem of the unquenchable fire of which we read in the New Testament, as that which will be suffered by the ungodly in a future state. I would refer those who would wish to see this view of the passage in question brought out more fully, to the observations of Dr. Gill, incomparably the most learned of all our English expositors of Scripture.

But I take other and higher ground than this. I maintain that the true meaning of Jude, where he uses the words in relation to the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah who were destroyed by fire from heaven, is, that they are now suffering, and will for ever suffer, in the

regions of perdition, the “vengeance of eternal fire.” First of all, it is worthy of observation that their punishment is spoken of in the present tense. It is not that they suffered, but that they are now suffering; and then the word “eternal” following the word “suffering,” clearly, to my mind, shows that Jude spoke of the awful doom of the guilty inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah in relation to their present and their future sufferings in another state of being. Indeed, I think this view of the passage so clear, that I wonder that some of our commentators, otherwise believing in the eternity of future punishments, should have put any other construction upon it. The previous verse, which is connected by the word “even” with the verse under consideration, proves, beyond all question—at least to my apprehension—that it is of the eternal fire which is now burning in the abodes below, of which the Apostle speaks. The immediate context is as follows:—“The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He”—that is, God—“hath reserved in everlasting chains^u under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” Then follows the verse in which the expression of “suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” occurs. “Even,” says Jude, “as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like

manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” From the time of their expulsion from heaven, the angels that sinned “have been reserved in everlasting chains under darkness,”—which expression all admit to mean their punishment in hell; and there they will remain unto the judgment of the great day. Then they will, before the whole universe of God, be again consigned to their dismal prison, there to remain through all eternity. If their punishment were not to be eternal, but only of limited duration, however prolonged the period might be, the word “everlasting” could not, with strict propriety, be employed in the way it here is. The two verses in relation to the two classes, the fallen angels and the guilty inhabitants of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, being so strictly analogous in their scope, and so closely connected that they might be regarded as constituting only one passage,—I can but repeat the expression of my wonder that the view which I take of the words, “suffering the vengeance of eternal fire,” has, so far as my somewhat extensive theological reading goes, escaped all our most eminent evangelical divines. It will be interesting to many of my readers to know that my view of the import of

the passage under consideration has always been entertained by the most distinguished writers among the Jews, and, indeed, by the Jews as a body. Their language on the point is this:—"The men of Sodom have no part or portion in the world to come, and shall not see the world to come." By this phrase, "the world to come," the Jews always mean the heavenly state. If, then, the guilty—and the doom of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah was spiritually a type of that of all the ungodly—are *never* to see heaven, it follows, with a logical force which is not to be withstood, that all the wicked dying in their sins must be the subjects of everlasting punishment.

It has been sought, by the opponents of eternal punishments, to neutralize the effects of the passages of Scripture in favour of that doctrine to which I have called attention, by urging that the words "eternal" and "everlasting" are sometimes used in Scripture as simply conveying the idea of temporary punishments. I join issue with my opponents here. With respect to the word "everlasting" I shall have more to say hereafter. As regards the term "eternal," I broadly and boldly maintain that there is not one solitary passage in the Book of God in which any other sense can be fairly put upon it, except that of a

never-ending duration. The only portion of Holy Writ on which an argument could, with any show of reason, be raised from the word in favour of a limited duration of future punishments, is the fifteenth verse of the sixtieth chapter of the Book of Isaiah. Speaking of the latter-day glory reserved for God's ancient people, and contrasting it with their despised and degraded intervening history, the prophet brings God before us as saying:—"Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." This refers to God's restored and converted people Israel. And therefore, speaking in the spiritual sense of the passage, the ransomed and regenerated Jews will be made an eternal excellency, inasmuch as their salvation and consequent happiness will terminate. Our Lord said, in the course of his ministrations when on earth, that those who believed in Him *had* everlasting life; and so the believing Jews, at the period to which Isaiah here pointed, will acquire an excellency which, begun in this world, will be consummated and made eternal in heaven.

I hope I have made it plain that the word "eternal," as employed in the portion of Isaiah which I have been considering, cannot be pressed

into the service of those who deny eternal punishments. It would be manifestly a forced construction to say that it does mean, or may be made to mean, a limited period. Well, then, it is beyond all dispute, that in no other instance in which the adjective "eternal" occurs in the Word of God, there is even the faintest semblance of a reason for its being understood in the sense of limited duration. The point is so important, as bearing on the momentous question of the eternity, or otherwise, of future punishments, that I ask the indulgence of my readers while I advert particularly to it.

First of all, then, no one, so far as I am aware, ever doubted that the young man mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in their several Gospels, as coming to Christ and asking Him what he should do that he might inherit eternal life,—meant, by the phrase "eternal life," a happiness in heaven which should never end. Neither has any theologian, or even sceptic, so far as I know, ever doubted—much less denied—that the lawyer who came to our Lord, in a spirit of mockery, with the same question on his lips, understood the phrase "eternal life" in the sense of a never-ending existence in heaven. It is evident that in this, as in the other case, the phrase "eternal life" was understood equally by the

parties putting the questions, and by our Lord in answering them, as relating to eternity in the absolute sense of the word. So with regard to all the other instances in which the term "eternal" occurs, the context, or the verse in which it is to be found, shows clearly that it is not to be interpreted in the sense of a limited duration, however prolonged, but in its common acceptance as expressive of a life which never will come to an end, or of things which shall endure for ever.

But in order effectually to sweep away the sandy foundation on which the advocates of limited punishments in a future state build their theory, so far as relates to their assumption that the word may mean a limited period, let us glance at every instance in which it is used in Scripture. No one will suppose that the existence of God will ever come to an end, and that, consequently, the word "eternal" is to be understood in a limited sense when Moses said to the children of Israel, "'The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.'" When the Apostle Paul speaks, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, of "the eternal power" of God, no one has ever questioned the fact, that in this passage the power of God is affirmed to be everlasting, just as it is infinite. No less is the fact of the never-ending glory and

bliss of the heavenly state admitted on all hands to be declared in the same Apostle's words, when he says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." In the very next verse to that which I have just quoted from the fourth chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, we find the same word "eternal" employed in the sense of never-ending duration. "The things," says the Apostle, in the concluding clause of the verse, "which are seen are temporal, while the things which are not seen are eternal." Here the word "temporal," as applied to things which shall have an end, is placed in contrast with "eternal things" which shall have no end, but will endure for ever.

In the first verse of the next chapter of this same second Epistle to the Corinthian Church, we read: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." No one has ever thought, much less said, that the term "eternal" in this passage is susceptible of any interpretation other than that of never-ending duration. The very contrast which is found in the verse between the earthly house and the heavenly, necessarily implies that the latter will never be dissolved, but

remain unimpaired through all eternity. Neither will any one deny or doubt that the word “eternal,” as used in the seventeenth verse of the first chapter of the same Apostle’s First Epistle to Timothy, is susceptible of any other interpretation than that of never-ending duration. “Now,” says the Apostle, “unto the king eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.” Every one who believes in God at all, believes in his eternal existence, no less with regard to the future than with respect to the past. But as if the eternity of Jehovah, both as regards his being and attributes, had been at this time specially impressed on the mind of Paul, he ascribes to Him, in this very verse, the attribute of immortality; and a few words farther on, in the same verse, he adds, “to whom”—that is to God—“be honour and glory for ever and ever.” In the Second Epistle to Timothy, the same Apostle, in speaking of the saints, says, “I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” Here, again, the word “eternal” is used in a sense which admits of no other meaning than that of a glory which never shall have an end.

In the ninth verse of the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, our Lord is spoken of

by the inspired writer as the Author of “eternal salvation unto all who obey Him.” So, in the chapter which follows, the expression occurs, “The resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” Neither in this case has any one ever doubted that the term “eternal” points to a period of never-ending duration,—the word “judgment” not being understood in the sense of its lasting for ever and ever, but that its consequences will be eternal in their duration. In the twelfth verse of the ninth chapter, the redemption which Christ has obtained for those who believe in Him is called “eternal redemption,” obviously meaning a redemption which shall endure through all eternity; and, in the verse following except one, the Holy Spirit is called the “eternal Spirit,” “through whom He,” Jesus, “offered Himself without spot unto God.” And this our Lord did, as we are told in the succeeding verse, that all who believe in Him might receive the promise of *eternal* inheritance. In these instances, again, the word “eternal” so manifestly means a period which shall never end, that, as in all the preceding passages I have quoted, no one has ever said that the word could be applied to any limited period,—no matter were it to extend to a period immeasurably beyond the powers of arithmetic to compute.

I have thus referred to all the portions of Scripture in which the word "eternal" is employed, with the single exception of that in which it is used in relation to "life" in a future state. To the expression, "eternal life," which occurs no fewer than twenty-eight times in the New Testament, I shall advert presently. But before I do so, it may be right to remark that the word "eternal" applies, in some of the texts I have quoted, to a past eternity, as well as to an eternity which is to come. This is the case in such passages as I have quoted in relation to God and the Holy Spirit, where God is spoken of as the "eternal God," and the Holy Spirit as the "eternal Spirit." But here again, in relation to each of the three Persons in the Trinity, and to the Trinity in Unity, all admit that they are equally eternal in reference to the past and to the future. The argument is equally appropriate and equally forcible, if the word "eternal" be applied to God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, in relation to the past. Their past existence had no beginning, just as it will have no end, and therefore the term eternal, as applied in relation to the past, to each Person of the Trinity, and to the Trinity in its collective capacity, is just as applicable to a past period of unlimited duration, as when it is employed with

reference to the future. The word, in all instances in which it is used in Scripture, means unlimited duration, and therefore we are shut up to the conclusion, that when we meet with the phrases, “eternal damnation” and “eternal fire,” in connection with the dismal doom of the ungodly in a future state, it means that their misery will have no end,—that their torments will never, *never*, have a termination.

I have alluded to the expression “eternal life,” so often used in the New Testament. That expression, as I have just remarked, is admitted, by all who regard the Bible as a revelation from God, to mean the never-ending happiness of the saints of God, begun here on earth and consummated in heaven. Now, I regard as of great importance the fact that Jude employs, in the twenty-first verse, the phrase “*eternal* life,” because the obvious inference is, that when, in the seventh verse, he uses the words “*eternal* fire,” he as much attached the meaning of never-ending to the word “eternal” in the latter case, as in the former. In other words, Jude, inspired by the Holy Ghost, just as much believed in and taught the eternity of future punishments as he did the eternity of future rewards. There is not the semblance of a reason for believing that the word “eternal” means never-ending in relation

to the future rewards of the righteous, and only of limited duration in reference to the punishment of the wicked. On the argument grounded on the teaching of Jude, I lay great stress, and earnestly ask its careful consideration from those who may have hitherto denied or doubted the doctrine of never-ending punishments in the world to come.

Though, as I have before remarked, the word "eternal," in its relation to future punishments, only occurs twice in the Scriptures, the word "*everlasting*" is more frequently so applied. It is thus applied in Isaiah and Daniel, in the Old Testament. It first occurs in the fourteenth verse of the thirty-third chapter of the book of Isaiah. "Who among us," asks the prophet, "shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" I can conceive of no language which could more clearly set forth the eternity of the punishments which the wicked are destined to endure in the world to come. The word "*everlasting*" is synonymous with that of "eternal"; and if this be so, nothing could more clearly establish the truth of the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments. No word can go beyond that of "eternal"; and if it be said that the burnings with, or amidst which, the wicked shall hereafter dwell

will be “everlasting,” the unending duration of the dismal doom of those who die in their sins is conclusively proved. I might even say that no further proof of the fact is required; but as the subject is, if I may so express myself, immeasurably more momentous than the mind can conceive, it becomes a matter of solemn obligation to God and man that a sufficient amount of proof of the doctrine be brought forward, in order that the mouths of gainsayers may be stopped, and that the truth, however awful, may be placed in so strong and clear a light as that no one may be able to resist its force.

The other instance in which we meet with the word in the Old Testament in its connection with future punishments, is in the second verse of the twelfth chapter of the book of Daniel. “And many of them,” says the prophet, referring to the general resurrection which will come at the end of the world—“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Here the word “everlasting” as plainly means never-ending in relation to the awful doom of the wicked, as it does to the bright and blessed destiny of the righteous. The word in each case is used in the same sentence, and that sentence is spoken, as it were, in the

same breath of God's inspired prophet. If the word does not mean endless duration in relation to the ungodly, who shall come out of the dust of the earth on the morning of the resurrection, no recognized canon of interpretation can put any other construction on it as applied to those who rise from their graves to life in heaven. I hold this to be an impregnable position for those who, like myself, believe in the eternity of future punishments. Nothing can touch it. Further words would only weaken its force.

I now come to the consideration of the word "everlasting" as we meet with it in the New Testament. In the eighth verse of the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel by Matthew, we read that, in the language of our Lord, "It is better to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire." That the fire here spoken of is "hell fire," is evident from what is said in the following verse, where our Lord, who is the speaker, says, "it is better to enter into life with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." So that the phrase "everlasting fire" means eternal punishment in that place of whose inhabitants, it is said, "their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." The antithesis to the expressions, "everlasting fire," in

this portion of Scripture, is the word “life,” and the whole scope of the part of Scripture in which the word and the expressions occur, proves that “life” means eternal life, or eternal glory and bliss in heaven. On the principles of analogy, therefore, just as certainly as the “life” here spoken of means “*eternal* life,” so the phrase, “everlasting fire,” means *eternal* punishment in the world to come.

Nor can the same expression, “everlasting fire,” be interpreted in any other sense than that of never-ending anguish of mind and agony of body, as the phrase is to be found in the forty-first verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of the same Evangelist’s Gospel. “Then,” it is said in the verse in question, “shall He”—that is Christ—“say unto them on his left hand, Depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” The fire, or the punishment, no matter of what nature it may be, “is to be everlasting.” The sufferings of those who die with their sins unrepented of and unpardoned, will be everlasting; they will never come to a termination. I know of no combination of words that could more clearly express any important truth, than the words in question do the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments. The fire into which the wicked

will be cast on the day of judgment will be “*everlasting*” fire,—a fire that never will be quenched.

In the same chapter, and at the forty-sixth verse, it is thus written :—“ And these ”—namely the wicked—“ shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Though the word “fire” is not here used, the word “punishment” is, which is expressive of the same dismal doom in a future state of existence.

As the “fire” in a previous verse is said to be “*everlasting*,” so the “punishment” mentioned in this verse is characterized as being “*everlasting*” too. But in the latter portion of Scripture, the fact that future punishments will be eternal in their duration, is not only proved by their being described as “*everlasting*,” but by their analogy, as relates to their eternity, with the future destiny of the righteous. “These,” says our Lord, speaking of the ungodly, standing on his left hand on the day of judgment,—“These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but,” adds the Saviour, “the righteous into life eternal.” If the word “*everlasting*” is here to be so construed as make it mean punishment for a definite period, however prolonged that period may be, then by parity of reasoning, the “life eternal,” or heaven, into which the

righteous are to go, must admit of being interpreted in the same sense—namely, of limited duration. What, then, is the conclusion to which we are irresistibly compelled to come? None other than this—that the happiness of the righteous in heaven redeemed by the blood of Christ, *may* also come to a close, instead of being, as believers in Jesus have supposed, as eternal in its duration as the existence of God? There is, in a word, as the late Dr. Sumner, Archbishop of Canterbury remarked in one of his published works, as conclusive evidence in this portion of Scripture for the everlasting punishment of the wicked, as there is for the eternal life of the righteous. Interpret the phrase, “everlasting punishment” in the sense of future punishments being only for a limited period, and you must construe the expression, “life eternal,” in accordance with the same principle of interpretation; and therefore you are compelled to give up your belief in the eternity of heaven’s happiness. There is no alternative course in dealing with this forty-sixth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel. We are thus brought to the conclusion, that if future punishments be not eternal, we have no guarantee, nothing on which we can rely, for the eternity of the bliss and glory of the heavenly state.

The next part of Scripture in which the term “everlasting” is used, in relation to future punishments, is the ninth verse of the first chapter of the Second Epistle of the Thessalonians. But in order that the phrase “everlasting destruction,” as there employed in its association with the punishment of the ungodly in a future state, may be seen in its connection with the context, it will be necessary to quote the two preceding verses and the verse which follows that in which the expression occurs. “And to you,” says the Apostle, addressing himself to the Church at Thessalonica,—“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.” No one doubts that the reference here is to the second advent of Christ, at the end of the world, as a preliminary step to the general judgment. On that occasion, or at that time, those who know not God, and have not obeyed the Gospel

of our Lord Jesus Christ, are to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power. Those who have embraced the theory of annihilation contemporaneously with the death of the body, interpret the word “destruction,” as here employed, as if it were synonymous with annihilation. The simple fact is, that the “destruction” here spoken of, which is to be the doom of the ungodly, is a destruction which befalls them, not at the time of their death, but in the day of judgment. And that we know will be the case with millions on millions of mankind, after an interval of thousands of years, inasmuch as thousands of years have intervened since the day of their natural death. Now it is plain that if such persons, as a certain class of Annihilationists tell us, had been destroyed both as regards their souls and bodies at death, they could not be made the objects of destruction, in the annihilation sense of the term, thousands of years after their bodies had been consigned to the grave.

But we are not driven, by necessity of any kind, to dwell on the meaning of the word “destruction,” as here employed. Most Universalists admit that the term “destruction” in this case means punishment in a future state,—only they demur to its being interpreted as if it meant a

destruction or punishment which shall never end. But the word “everlasting” stands immediately before the word “destruction.” Now, what is to be inferred from this? Simply, that as the “destruction” spoken of is admitted to be synonymous with punishment, we are compelled to conclude that that punishment will never come to an end, but will last for ever and ever. There is no other interpretation of the passage which ever has been or ever can be, with the slightest show of reason, advanced, than one of the two which I have mentioned,—annihilation or a living punishment. And if the latter, which I repeat, is the one adopted by those with whom I am contending, there is no other conclusion to which any one can come, than that the destruction, otherwise the punishment, is to be eternal in its duration.

The only remaining portion of Scripture in which the word “everlasting” occurs in connection with the doom in another world of the ungodly is in the sixth verse of the Epistle of Jude. The verse is as follows:—“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” It is right to remark, as will be seen from the verse itself, that [it is of fallen

angels, and not of ungodly men, that the Apostle here speaks. But that does not in the slightest degree affect the force of my argument. Most of those who disbelieve in the eternity of future punishments, in relation to wicked men, equally disbelieve in the eternity of the punishments inflicted on fallen angels. The theory, indeed, of ultimate *universal* salvation, necessarily involves the eventual restoration even of fallen angels. Without their recovery and their being made, sooner or later, the recipients of happiness in heaven, the Universalist hypothesis would be a contradiction. Well, then, let those who have embraced the theory that all intelligent beings—angels equally with mankind—will be at some future period restored to the Divine favour, and be made heirs of everlasting happiness in heaven, fix their attention on what is said in this sixth verse of Jude's Epistle. "They are," we are told, "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." The meaning is not that the chains of the fallen angels are then to be knocked off, or that they will, by the time that day arrives, have wasted away. In either case, the word "everlasting" would be misapplied. The chains would not be everlasting. The obvious interpretation of the passage is, that they are reserved, or kept in

chains which will be everlasting, until the judgment of the great day. They will appear before their Judge in the chains which they have worn for thousands, it may be for millions, of years, for anything the Scriptures tell us to the contrary, to receive before the whole intelligent universe of God, that sentence, as the result of their condemnation for the sins they committed in heaven, which will send them back to their dismal prison, there to be in chains through all eternity. For them, any more than for those of our race who have perished in their sins, there never will, there never can, be the slightest ray of hope of ultimate deliverance.

And to show beyond all possibility of reasonable doubt that the doom of the ungodly in the world to come will be the same in its nature and duration as that of the fallen angels, there occurs the expression, before adverted to, that the guilty inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are now suffering, "the vengeance of eternal fire." I have in a previous part of this chapter proved that what the doom of the ungodly inhabitants of those cities is, and through all eternity will be, is precisely the doom which is in reserve for all those in the present day who live and die in their sins.

I have thus shown that the word "ever-

lasting," when it occurs in Scripture in connection with future punishments, means a period which is endless; in other words, means eternity, in the same sense as the word is applicable to the existence of God Himself and the duration of the happiness of heaven. So clear, indeed, does this appear to my mind, that the word as used in the connection I have mentioned, ought to suffice to bring home an overpowering conviction to every mind that the dismal destiny of the ungodly will never, *never* have an end. But the subject is so awfully momentous, that I earnestly bespeak the attention of my readers to my examination of the objections urged by Universalists against the word "everlasting," as used in relation to the duration of punishments in a future state.

THE DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENTS.

PART FOURTH.

It has been sought, but without success, to meet the argument in favour of the eternity of future punishments, derived from the adjective “everlasting” being applied to the doom of the ungodly, by urging that that word is repeatedly applied to things which are not in the strict significance of the term of unending duration. Some even go so far as to say that the Greek word “*aionion*,” from which the translation “everlasting” is made, does not under any circumstances mean eternal duration. Suppose we concede for a moment, for the sake of argument, that the Greek word which is thus translated “everlasting” in our version of the Bible does not, in any case, mean endless duration, are the opponents of everlasting punishment conscious of the consequences to which this view of the meaning of the term inevitably leads them? If in no instance in which the word “everlasting”

occurs in the Scripture, does it mean never-ending duration, then we have no ground, so far as the word "everlasting" is concerned, for our belief that the happiness of heaven, any more than the miseries of hell, will last for ever. If the word in question may not in any instance be received as expressive of endless duration, it follows that it is a great mistake for any one to conclude that the glory and bliss of heaven will never have an end; for the word "everlasting" is employed in reference to the happiness of those who, when they die, will be received into those celestial mansions which Jesus is now engaged in preparing for all who are his followers. There is no escaping the force of this argument. Are any of those whose eye may light upon these pages, who deny the eternal duration of future punishments, prepared for this consequence of their theory? I am unwilling to bring myself to that belief. And yet I see it elaborately contended in the writings of those who advocate the doctrine of the limited duration of future punishments, that the word "everlasting" does not in any one instance mean, in the original Greek, a period which shall never come to a close.

But there is another and most triumphant mode of dealing with those who deny the eternity of future punishments, because they

hold that the Greek word from which the translation “everlasting” is made, does not mean endless duration. The term, as I have mentioned in my previous chapter, occurs in two places in the Old Testament in connection with the punishment of the ungodly in another world; but it is necessary I should add a word or two to what I have already said respecting them. The first is in Isaiah, where the question is asked, “Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” The other instance in which the word is so used, is in the second verse of the concluding chapter of the prophecies of Daniel:—“And many of them,” says that prophet, “that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake—some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Here, as in the parallel passage, in the words of our Lord in the New Testament, we have as explicit and emphatic a declaration as any combination of words could furnish, that the rewards of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be of the same duration, and that that duration, if the word “everlasting” be rightly translated, will be endless. The question then comes to be, Is the term “everlasting” rightly rendered from the Hebrew word? It is an important fact that those who disbelieve in the eternity of punish-

ments in a future state, make the concession that no person of distinction among Hebrew scholars has ever challenged the accuracy of the rendering of the word "everlasting" in the passages of Scripture in question. I have had conversations on the subject with an eminent Jewish scholar, and he pledges his reputation for scholarship, which is very high, to the fact, that in the two portions of the Old Testament to which I have referred, the word "everlasting" is correctly translated in the sense of eternal. And if so, we have unanswerable proofs from the language of Isaiah and Daniel, that future punishments will never have an end.

With regard to the other, and much more numerous class of Universalists, who admit that the term "everlasting" does, in the majority of cases, mean a duration which shall never end, they seek to evade its force by saying that in several instances the word is occasionally applied to things which will not be eternal in their duration. But the answer to this is obvious. The instances in which we read of the "everlasting hills," the "everlasting mountains," etc., never were so misconceived, and never could be, as that any one should receive them in the literal sense of being perpetuated through all eternity. Other passages of Scripture would have rectified so

erroneous a conclusion, had it been possible that any one could have come to it. The entire material world will, at some future day, and one not very remote, if we correctly interpret the signs of the times, be burnt up. The mountains and the hills will, we are told, melt like wax at the second coming of the Lord. No one doubts this, and therefore no one could ever fall into the mistake of supposing that the word "everlasting" could apply to the hills or the mountains, or other things to which it is sometimes applied in Scripture. It is, where so used, a mere hyperbole, just as the word "all" is often applied to things which, strictly speaking, can only be spoken of in relation to a part. Thus, for instance, when Paul said that the gospel had been in his day preached in all the world, it had only been preached in a comparatively small part, even of what was then known of the world. And so, when John closes his narrative of the life and labours of our Lord, no one would ever accept his expression in its literal sense when he says, that if all that Christ said and did had been recorded—and this, be it observed, during a time not much exceeding three years—the world could not contain the books that would be written. It was so obviously a hyperbolical phrase that no one could for a moment be misled by it. And so

is it, in every instance in which the word "everlasting," or any synonymous expression, such as "for ever," is employed in relation to things which will not be of eternal duration. Something in all such cases is said in the verse, or in the context, which precludes the possibility of its being understood as expressive of eternal duration. I confidently affirm that no simple-minded Christian ever mistakes the import of the term "everlasting." He never construes it as meaning endless duration when it only applies to a definite period ; and he never, on the other hand, falls into the error of so rendering the word as to convey the idea of a limited period, when it is intended to teach the doctrine of eternal duration. There is something or other in, or in connection with, every portion of Scripture in which the word "everlasting" occurs, which plainly indicates the sense in which in that particular passage the word is to be understood. And I do maintain that no intelligent person, not having preconceived notions on the subject, can conscientiously say that any other construction than that of endless duration can be put on the word "everlasting" in the instances which I have quoted, as showing that the term means never-ending.

The advocates of the doctrine of a limited

duration of future punishments dissent from the doctrine of their eternity, on the assumption that as in the case of the word "everlasting," so in that of the phrases "for ever" and "for ever and ever," the expressions are employed in relation to that which we know will not endure "for ever." As in the case of the words "everlasting" and "eternal," I at once make this concession to those who reject the doctrine of never-ending punishments. But when I have done so, their case is not bettered. The concession, viewed in its proper light, will, indeed, not only be of no avail to them, but will not even give the semblance of support to their hypothesis. Wherever the phrases "for ever," and "for ever and ever," are employed in reference to that which is, or will be, of limited duration, the fact that they do relate to things or periods of time which are not everlasting is so plain, that no one could fail to see that such is their meaning. I could fill pages with proofs of this ; but it is not necessary. I will content myself with a very few instances. First of all, then, any one who reads the Book of Deuteronomy will find God repeatedly saying to his people Israel, that the bondsmen and women taken from the heathens would be their servants "for ever." No one could possibly fall into the mistake of interpreting this

language of Jehovah as meaning that those Israelites who had heathen servants would, with their servants, live "for ever." Both masters and servants knew that, after the lapse of a limited number of years, the servants would severally die, and consequently cease to be servants to the Jews, or to any one else. No one, therefore, in Old Testament times, understood the words in their literal significance. Neither could the Israelites have understood God to mean, in the literal sense of the words, the promise of God that they should possess the promised land of Canaan "for ever." They could not have so accepted the phrase unless they believed that this world was destined to last for ever, which, we know was no part of their creed. But when we read in various parts of the Old Testament that God will destroy or punish the ungodly "for ever," the thing is quite different, especially when viewed in association with other portions of Scripture which enunciate and assert the doctrine of everlasting punishments in that state of being which will succeed the present. So in the seventeenth verse of the second chapter of Peter's Second Epistle, no one can understand the phrase "for ever" to mean anything but the eternal duration of the dismal doom of the ungodly, when the Apostle speaks of them as persons "to whom

the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.” The same remark applies with equal force to the similar phrase in the thirteenth verse of the Epistle of Jude, where, speaking of the ungodly, that Apostle says :—“ To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”

And so with regard to the kindred phrase “for ever and ever.” In the seventh verse of the seventh chapter of the book of Jeremiah, we read, “ Then will I cause you” (the Jews) “ to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.” Soon after this the Jews were exiled from Judæa, and were kept in captivity for many years ; and therefore their successors knew, from painful experience, that the words were not meant to be accepted in their literal significance,—just as those to whom they were spoken knew that they could not be received literally. The phrase, therefore, “ for ever and ever,” could not in such cases be interpreted as meaning “ eternity.” But it would be otherwise when the phrase was applied either to the happiness of the saints in the world to come, or the destinies of those who died impenitent and unpardoned. If there be any definite significance in words, I hold it to be impossible that any other construction than the eternity of the punishment of the wicked, could be put on the language of

John in the Book of Revelation, when speaking, in the eleventh verse of the fourteenth chapter of that book, of those who worshipped the beast—which means all the ungodly—he says, “And the smoke of their torment”—namely, in the world to come—“ascendeth up for ever and ever.” There is a wonderful strength in this language in reference alike to the severity and eternity of the punishment of the ungodly in that place to which they are consigned at their death. It is not mere pain that they are to suffer. It is absolute torment. The word, as here employed, denotes intense agony. And then, to aggravate the terrible nature of their sufferings, the eternal duration of their punishment is asserted in language which, I maintain, cannot, by any ingenuity, however great, be so explained away as to mean anything else but everlasting,—“The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.” If those who deny the doctrine of eternal punishments were called on to say in what terms they would express themselves were they believers in the everlasting misery of the lost, so as to give the most explicit and most forcible expression to their faith in that doctrine,—I hold that they could employ no phraseology which would more successfully accomplish their purpose. A similar phrase occurs in the third verse of the nineteenth

chapter. "Their smoke," we are told—namely, the smoke of the flames in which they are enveloped—"rose up for ever and ever." In the tenth verse of the succeeding chapter the Apostle again makes use of substantially the same form of expression. There we are told that "the beast and the false prophet"—representatives of all the lost—were "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone," where the devil had been cast before them, and where they "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

I ask again, Could any language be employed that would more clearly, more emphatically, or more conclusively establish the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments, than the expression, here three times repeated, "for ever and ever," when applied to the dismal destiny of those who perish in their sins?

Thus far I have dwelt on the terms "eternal," "everlasting," and the phrases "for ever" and "for ever and ever," as proving the endlessness of future punishments, as these terms and phrases are applied to the duration of the awful destiny of the wicked. To my own mind the evidence thus furnished in favour of that view is so clear and unanswerable that I do not see how any intelligent and unprejudiced reader of what I have written, can resist the conclusion

that the punishment of the ungodly in a future state will be of endless duration.

But even if there were no such words and expressions in the Bible in favour of a belief in the eternity of future punishments, the awful doctrine can, I maintain, be proved by other phrases of a different kind. First of all, I do not see how any one can fail to discern the doctrine of eternal punishments in the concluding sentence in the words of our Lord in the twelfth verse of the third chapter of the Gospel by St. Matthew, when Jesus says that the “wheat”—which means the people of God—will be gathered into the garner, but that “the chaff”—the wicked—will be burnt up with “unquenchable fire.” So great is the influence which those theories have that men would wish to be true, in warping their judgment, that some of those who advocate the ultimate universal restoration of mankind imagine they can find an argument in favour of the non-eternity of future punishments in this very text. So far from the passage countenancing that notion, it is entirely destructive of it. If the “chaff” is to be “burnt up,” that would rather imply annihilation than renovation and restoration. But the passage which follows conclusively shows that neither annihilation nor restoration is meant.

The burning of the chaff, it is stated by our Lord Himself, is to be by means of, or with, “unquenchable fire.” If the fire is to be unquenchable, or never to be extinguished, there is no escaping the conclusion that the chaff, or the ungodly, in another world will be for ever in that fire. The very phrase “unquenchable fire” necessarily presupposes that there must be something or somebody to be eternally tormented in its flames.

In the same Gospel, and in the words also of our Lord and Saviour, we have a further proof, in the ninth verse of the eighteenth chapter, of the eternity of future punishments. “If,” said Jesus, in his conversation with his disciples, “thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.” The hell fire which is here spoken of is so manifestly the same as “the *everlasting* fire” spoken of in the previous verse, that no one will question the fact. In this passage of Scripture, therefore, another proof is furnished, though neither the word “everlasting” nor that of “eternal,” nor the phrases “for ever” and “for ever and for ever,” are employed—that the misery of the ungodly in the world to come will be eternal.

But the most striking of all the evidence which the Bible contains that future punishments will be endless, grounded on words or phrases other than those in which the words or phrases "eternal" or "everlasting," or "for ever," etc., occur,—will be found in the latter part of the ninth chapter of the Gospel by Mark. In connection with the question of the duration of punishments in the world to come, there is something so very emphatic, something so very explicit, something, we may add, so overpoweringly plain, that I wonder how any man can read the passage and yet have a doubt or misgiving with regard to the eternity of that punishment which is to be inflicted on the ungodly in a future state. And here again, let the solemn truth be impressed deeply on each of our minds, that it is the utterances of our Lord on the subject to which we are now called to give our attention. Addressing Himself to his disciples, our Lord says, in the forty-third verse of the ninth chapter of Mark, "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched." Here it is explicitly affirmed that in hell, which is to be the place of the punishment of the ungodly, there will be a fire which "never shall

be quenched.” That, it might be supposed, is sufficiently explicit and emphatic language in relation to the eternity of the misery of those who shall be sentenced to punishment on the great day of judgment. But our Lord has something stronger still to say on the subject. “Where,” He adds, “their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” I should have mentioned before that Christ here refers to the passage in Isaiah, “Who shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” While it is admitted by all Biblical critics and commentators that the prophet Isaiah had a local circumstance in his mind when he wrote these words, it is no less agreed that our Lord Himself had,—not to mention various other parts of the evangelistic writings,—in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses of the fifth chapter of the Gospel by Matthew, where He says:—“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.”

The allusions of Isaiah and of our Lord were to a place called Gehenna, or the "valley of Hinnom," in which was another place called Tophet, situated in a steep, narrow glen, about a mile and a half south-east of Jerusalem. In Solomon's time this was the most beautiful spot in Palestine. It was consequently called his "Musical grove," but because of the idolatry of the Jews, when they sacrificed their children to Moloch, it was changed into the most loathsome locality that could be conceived. It became the receptacle of everything that was offensive in the city of Jerusalem. Fires were continually kept up in it to consume the dead bodies of criminals, the carcases of animals, and everything else of a filthy kind that was combustible. In consequence of these fires thus kept perpetually burning, Gehenna came to be regarded as an appropriate and expressive emblem of the place, and the nature of the punishment to be inflicted on the ungodly in a future state. The late Rev. Dr. Henderson, whose Commentary on Isaiah is generally allowed to be one of the soundest ever penned on the writings of that prophet, says:—"The concluding words of the verse, 'Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' have no meaning except there be in them an implicit reference to eternal punishment.

Of that punishment the impious Jews had a striking emblem before their eyes, in the fires of Tophet,—or Gehenna, ‘in which the dead bodies of the Assyrians were being burnt.’” And, Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian of the fourth century, bears testimony to the fact that the Jews in the latter part of Old Testament times, did regard the perpetually burning fires of Gehenna as emblematical of the eternal fires of hell. In Dr. Smith’s “Biblical Dictionary,” an admission is made to the same effect. “True,” says the writer, “the depth and narrowness of the gorge, and perhaps its ever burning fires, as well as from its being the receptacle of all sorts of putrifying matter, and all that defiled the holy city, it became in later times the image of the place of everlasting punishment, ‘where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.’”

I regard this as a very important admission, coming from such a quarter ; first, because it may be doubted whether out of the sixty-eight contributors to Dr. Smith’s “Dictionary,” mostly consisting of learned clergymen of the Church of England, the larger proportion of them are believers in the endless duration of future punishment ; and, secondly, because it is a fair inference that Dr. William Smith, the editor, is himself opposed to that doctrine, inasmuch as he stu-

diedly abstains from giving any opinion on that point, by making one of his contributors, under the heading "Hell," thus express himself:—"The subject of the punishment of the wicked, and of hell as a place of torment, belongs to a Theological rather than a Biblical Dictionary." In the admission referred to in Dr. Smith's Dictionary, under the head "Gehenna," we have a conclusive proof—and other proofs I shall furnish hereafter—of the fact that the Jews did believe in the eternity of future punishments.

But to return to our Lord's language relative to the doom of the lost,—“Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Here, under two emblems, the eternal suffering of the lost in that other world which they shall enter at death, is as explicitly and emphatically set forth as it would be possible to do in any language which could be employed for the purpose. Their worm is never to die. It is to gnaw on, or torment them for ever and ever. The fire into which they are to be cast will never cease burning. It will never be quenched,—never be put out, never die out. It will blaze and burn, just as their worm shall gnaw and torture, for ever and ever. And to make the impression, in the way of solemn warning, all the greater, our Lord repeats in the forty-fifth and forty-sixth verses

what he said in the forty-third and forty-fourth verses. They are, Jesus says, “to be cast into hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Here is a second repetition of words which most explicitly and emphatically affirm the endless duration of future punishments. See, then, how earnestly the Saviour sought, on the occasion in question, to impress on the minds of those to whom He addressed Himself, the awfully momentous truth that there will be no termination to the punishments of the ungodly in the world to come? He even reiterated a third time the assertion of that appalling doctrine, without even the slightest alteration in the case of “the fire that never shall be quenched,” within the brief space occupied by five verses. If language so explicit as that which is thus employed by our Lord, and which, in the case of one of the two expressions, is three times repeated, and in the other case, no fewer than five times—all, too, with one exception, in so many consecutive verses—admits of an explanation which is at variance with the doctrine of eternal punishment,—then there is no form of language which I know of in the meaning of which we can repose implicit confidence.

The doom of Judas, as it is recorded in the twenty-fifth verse of the twenty-sixth chapter of

the Gospel of St. Matthew, constitutes another indirect proof of the eternity of future punishments. “The Son of Man,” says our Lord in that verse, “goeth, as it is written of Him, but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had not been born.” If there is to be a cessation of punishments in the world to come—no matter how remote may be the period at which it is destined to take place—it could not be said with truth that it had been good for Judas that he had not been born. Assuming that he will not only ultimately cease to be tormented, but be pardoned, restored, and made perfectly and everlastingly happy in heaven, then it *will* be good for him that he was born.

The eternity of future punishments is also clearly taught in the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses of the fifth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew. Pointing out, in emblematical language, the relationship and accountability of men to God, and the consequent wisdom of being reconciled to God, our Lord expresses Himself as follows:—“Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee,

Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.” If those who are thus cast into prison, the prison of hell, shall not come out of their dismal dungeon until they have paid the debt—the debt which they owe to Divine justice,—to the “uttermost farthing,”—it is as clear as any words could make it, that they will never “come out thence” so long as eternity shall last. No human being will ever be able to discharge the debt for which he was consigned to the prison of hell. Even had he never committed but one sin, and that a comparatively light sin, he would never be able of himself to render the atonement which the justice of God imperatively demands. The greatness of *every* sin, in the sight of God, no matter what may be its nature, is clearly shown by the Apostle Paul when he says, that he who offendeth in one point is guilty of all. The Westminster Assembly of Divines—doubtless the ablest, the soundest, and most pious gathering of theologians of which we have any record in the ecclesiastical history of the world—gave it as their solemn deliverance, in that invaluable body of divinity called “The Shorter Catechism,” that “*every* sin deserveth God’s wrath and curse, both in this life and in that which is to come.” If therefore, Paul and they are right, that such is the enormity

of every individual sin, as well as of all sin in the aggregate, it is plain beyond all question that even those who are, comparatively speaking, the least guilty, will be found for ever in the prison of the lost, because not one of their number will ever be able to pay "the uttermost farthing" in relation to even the least of the sins they have committed, much less to pay the uttermost farthing as regards the great and manifold sins of which they have been guilty. The impossibility of paying their debt to the uttermost farthing will keep them locked up in their doleful prisons throughout all eternity. Instead, indeed, of paying or even lessening their debt, they will be hourly increasing the amount, for we are told that they will be unceasingly sinning in their prison, by blaspheming God, and otherwise proving that their hearts are more rebellious against Him than they were on earth.

I have thus furnished an amount of proof from the Word of God in favour of the eternity of future punishments of so conclusive a nature, that I cannot see how any one can resist it who recognizes the authority of Scripture, which all profess to do with whom I am now contending.

But there is another aspect of the scriptural argument in favour of the eternity of future punishments which I have never seen used by

those whose views are the same as my own on this subject. And yet, though the argument is one I have never seen employed before, it is, I maintain, sufficient of itself to settle the question at once and finally. The argument is this,—that taking relatively as to numbers, all the passages in Scripture which speak, either specifically or under some other unmistakable phraseology, of heaven and hell, there is actually more distinct assertions of the doctrine of the eternal duration of future punishments, than there are declarations of the doctrine of the everlasting happiness of heaven. This may surprise many of my readers. It is right, therefore, that I should enable them to verify my statements or disprove them, if that be possible. Well, then, I refer all who may be startled at what I have said, to the “Bible Text Cyclopædia” of the Rev. Mr. Inglis. The book, I should mention, is published by Gall and Inglis, Edinburgh. It occupied the compiler no fewer than seven years in preparing it for the press, and it is perhaps one of the most correct works connected with scriptural references which has ever been published. Let me, then, state, that under the head “Heaven,” Mr. Inglis gives 108 passages, more or less fully, which relate to that holy and happy place. Under the head “Hell,” the number of references to that place

of punishment is 26. Now, if the truth of a doctrine depended on the relative number of references to it, it will be found, on examining the portions of Scripture quoted by Mr. Inglis, that the amount of evidence is much greater for the eternity of future punishments than it is for the eternity of the happiness of heaven. *Out of 108 references relative to "Heaven" which are made in the work in question, only 28 affirm, or sanction; the unending blessedness of the celestial state; while out of the 26 references to "Hell," no fewer than 13 distinctly and emphatically assert the eternity of future punishments in the world to come.* Viewing, then, the number of quotations relatively—which is the logical course to adopt in conducting the argument—it will be seen that in proportion to the number of Scripture passages in which the everlasting happiness of the heavenly state is inculcated, compared with those in which it is not, and the instances in which the eternity of future punishments is taught, compared with those in which silence is preserved on the subject,—is twice as great in relation to the latter as in relation to the distinct recognition of the everlasting happiness of the righteous. This I hold to be a most important fact. It is, indeed, I contend, unanswerable as to the endless duration of future punishments, to find the amount

of scriptural evidence in favour of the latter relatively so much greater, than is the amount of evidence which is contained in the Bible for the eternity of heaven's happiness.

I feel that were I to proceed farther in the citation of proofs from Scripture that the ungodly, dying in their sins, will have to suffer eternal punishment, I should only be extending the argument to an unnecessary length. The accumulation of evidence in favour of the doctrine is as great in amount as it is decisive in its character. There is nothing equivocal about it. It is direct, explicit, positive. Deny the doctrine of the eternal duration of future punishments, viewed as a Scriptural doctrine, and any doctrine of the Bible may be denied or explained away. Words and sentences cease to possess any definite meaning, if the eternity of future punishments is not a doctrine of the Bible, affirmed, inculcated, and enforced in many portions of its pages. Those with whom we are contending, be it ever borne in mind, profess to receive the Scriptures as a special revelation from God, just as much as we do, who see with a noon-day clearness, that doctrine to be taught in both Testaments, especially in the New Testament. For myself, I must own that if the doctrine of eternal punishments—a most awful doctrine, I admit—be not

clearly taught in Scripture, then my faith in various other of the most vital of all Biblical doctrines would be most seriously shaken. But, happily, I am not reduced to this most distressing alternative. I am thoroughly persuaded that the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments is explicitly and emphatically taught in the inspired volume; and I trust that I have said enough to bring home the same conviction to the minds of my readers.

THE DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENTS.

PART FIFTH.

I MIGHT have pursued much further, as I remarked, in the conclusion of my last chapter, the Scriptural argument in favour of the doctrine of eternal punishments; but I feel a perfect persuasion that I have brought forward a sufficient amount of evidence from the Bible to satisfy any reasonable mind that that doctrine is everywhere taught in that book. Further arguments derived from the volume of inspiration would, I feel, be only a work of supererogation.

The endless duration of punishments in the world to come is a doctrine of the Scriptures which is felt and confessed to be true by many theologians by whom it is disliked, and who openly express their wish that it were not true. I may mention, as an instance, the name of the late Rev. Mr. Robertson, of Brighton. All who are acquainted with his works know that he

belonged to what is called the Broad Church, or Rationalistic school of theologians; and yet he was constrained to confess that the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments was so plainly taught in the Bible, that there was no resisting the Scriptural evidence in its favour. This fact is fully brought out in the biography of Mr. Robertson, lately published by the Rev. Stopford Brooke, whose theological views were quite as decided—in some respects even more so—as those of Mr. Robertson. The latter able and earnest, though on many points much mistaken man, thus expressed himself in a letter to a friend, on the subject of the duration of future punishments:—“*My only difficulty is how not to believe in everlasting punishments.*” Mr. Robertson was too honest, though on many momentous points deplorably in error, to say that the doctrine of eternal punishments was not a *Scriptural* doctrine: but I fear that there are great numbers, both in the Church and among the Dissenters, who feel as he felt,—that that doctrine is the doctrine of the Bible, who yet never preach it, however much their acts may naturally lead to the expression of their views on the subject. They do not enunciate, much less inculcate that doctrine, because they know that it is very unpalatable. In this they are chargeable with

keeping back that which their own consciences tell them is an essential portion of Divine truth, because they are afraid of offending their hearers by giving to the doctrine that place which it occupies in the Word of God. Such persons are not faithful stewards of the manifold grace of God ; and they themselves know, and consequently need not be told, either by me or by any one else, what kind of reckoning there will be at the last day with all those who have not been faithful to the trust which they have undertaken.

When compelled to confess, with Mr. Robertson, of Brighton, that the Scripture evidence in favour of the eternity of future punishments is too clear and conclusive to be resisted, the class of persons to whom I allude are in the habit of seeking for a resting-place for their feet against the doctrine of never-ending punishment, in their views of the benevolence, the humanity, and the mercy of God. They say that God is too good to doom any of his creatures to eternal punishment in the world to come, for sins which they have committed in the world that now is. They say that it would not only be unkind on the part of God, but at variance with our ordinary notions of his humanity to punish any of his creatures eternally in a future world for what they have

done amiss in the present state of being. What is this but practically saying that they are prepared deliberately to set up their own views of the character of God in opposition to what He has been pleased to reveal of Himself in his Word. It is placing themselves above God. It is practically declaring that they believe themselves to be wiser than God. They may, if they think fit, repudiate such an idea. They may persuade themselves that it has no foundation in fact, but that will not alter the state of things. If the evidence contained in the Scriptures in favour of the eternity of future punishments is so abundant and so strong, that they cannot in their judgment resist it, and seek to persuade themselves that God is too good and too merciful to doom any of his creatures to endless misery,—that is, say and think what they will, nothing short of proclaiming by their conduct that they do not believe what God says in his Word. It is making Him, in the language of inspiration, a liar; it is a practical declaration that He will not keep his word. I feel on this point so strongly, that I am constrained to speak plainly. I believe that this state of mind leading to corresponding action, is one of the prevalent errors of the day. And I regard it as being at least one of the most grievous sins

against God, and a most criminal course of conduct to their fellowmen. It is one for which there can be no excuse; nor, indeed, can any extenuating circumstance be urged in its favour. To believe a part of God's truth on which the eternal happiness or everlasting misery of one's fellowmen so manifestly depends, and yet shrink from preaching or teaching that truth in all its fulness,—is undoubtedly to be guilty of fearful sin in the sight of God.

But I will not dwell on that point. I shall have occasion to recur to it. Just now I wish to make it plain that the rejection of the doctrine of eternal punishment in a future state, is not only at variance with the evident and emphatic language of Scripture, but that the dictates of reason—grounded on the analogy of God's character, as revealed in his Word, and as exemplified in his moral administration of the affairs of the universe, so far as these are known to and comprehensible by us,—sanction the doctrine of the unending duration of future punishments.

The only argument, if argument it ought to be called, which the persons to whom I allude urge in favour of a limited duration of the punishment of the ungodly, in a future state, is, as I have before remarked, that it would be incompatible with the character of God to inflict

everlasting punishment for temporary sins committed in the present world. On the face of it this is, let me say first of all, mere assumption. No facts, no evidence of any kind, are adduced in support of the proposition. The facts and the evidence, putting aside the direct teachings of the Scriptures on the subject, lie in just the opposite direction. God, it is our joy and rejoicing to know, is good ; He is Goodness itself. All the other good that exists in the universe is derived from Him as the sole Fountain of goodness. When it is said in his own Word that God is love, we heartily acquiesce in the justice of that representation of his character. Neither fallen angels nor reprobate men will ever, through all eternity, be able to dissent from the great truth, that God's name and nature are love. Even their everlasting punishment, though we cannot in our present imperfect state of being show how, will most surely illustrate that attribute of the Divine character. But let me remind those who infer, from the love, or goodness, or kindness of God, that the punishment of those in a future state, who live and die in rebellion against God, will not be endless in its duration,—that the same inference might, with as great a show of reason, have been made by the angels in heaven, before sin entered into its holy and

blissful regions, against its ever achieving an admission there. No one who believes in God at all ever doubted, or could doubt, the power of God to have prevented the introduction of sin into heaven. If, indeed, God did not possess that power, He would not be Almighty. There must have been a power greater than his, in which case He could not, properly speaking have been God at all. And yet the solemn fact stares us in the face, that while God could have prevented the entrance of sin into heaven, and consequently have averted all the incalculable evil which followed its introduction,—that evil is witnessed in the inconceivable amount of misery which it has caused for millions of years, for anything we know to the contrary, and *certainly* for thousands of years. Yet He did not prevent that moral evil entering into heaven. This is a great mystery; and it ever will remain so as long as this world shall last. It is reserved for the effulgent light of a future state of being to enable us to form any suitable conception on the subject. But we know enough in our present state to know that it is a most unwise, and often is a most perilous thing, to form ideas of God which are grounded on what we read, or may think of Him, regarded exclusively as a God of love or of mercy. Though He is love and mercy in an infinitely

higher sense than either men or angels can conceive, yet He is no less a God of holiness and of justice ; and if we are staggered while we think of his ordaining eternal punishments for those who die in their sins, especially when He might have prevented the introduction of sin into his universe at all,—we ought to remember the language of Job, when in the seventh and eighth verses of the eleventh chapter of his book he puts these questions to those who in their ignorance arraigned in his day the wisdom of God's moral government—"Canst thou," he said, addressing himself to such persons, "by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" "It is," Job continues, "as high as heaven? what canst thou do? deeper than hell? what canst thou know?" In another part Job reproves the sin and folly of those who sit in judgment on God in relation to his mode of administering his government, or, who, in other words, "seek to be wise above what is written," God "giveth not," says the patriarch, "any account of his matters." To presume to sit in judgment on the ways of God in relation to his dealings with his creatures and to approve or condemn his government according to our notions of what is right and fit, is practically to make oneself wiser than God. Our wisdom is to lie low in the

dust before Him, and to be satisfied with the assurance that if we are his people, what we know not now, we shall know hereafter. In the meantime the disposition which many persons feel operating strongly within them, to reject the doctrine of eternal punishments, because they cannot believe that a being of infinite benevolence could doom any of his creatures to endless sufferings, ought to be conquered, when it is known that both in heaven and on earth He has permitted sin, with all its terrific consequences, not only to enter, but to prevail to so appalling an extent. If the love or goodness of God is assumed to be such as to render it morally impossible, or if not impossible, improbable in the highest degree to ordain everlasting punishments for any of his creatures, it surely is a natural inference from God's love or goodness that He ought not to have permitted, what He could so easily have prevented,—any of his creatures to fall so deeply into sin as to render them amenable to so dreadful a doom.

Besides if the punishment of the wicked is not to be eternal, but is to cease after thousands, myriads, or even millions of years—as most of the opponents of eternal punishments admit may be the term of their duration—does it not seem to mere reason that a lengthened infliction of

future punishments is unnecessary, and consequently gratuitous? If God had determined that after a certain period *all* those of his creatures on earth who die in their sins will be ultimately restored to holiness and happiness, could He not have caused them to undergo the process of renovation or restoration in a few weeks, or even a few moments, instead of prolonging their intense misery for thousands, or myriads, or, as I have just remarked, many who reject the doctrine of eternal punishments believe, for even millions of years? It must be—reasoning after the manner of those who thus practically dictate to God what He ought to do, and might do—as possible for God to act in this way, or to save the lost after a few weeks, as it will be after countless ages. So far at least as we can see, God in the latter case—I speak it with all reverence—inflicts unnecessary pain on his creatures.

With regard to the introduction of moral evil into the world, and especially into heaven, there is, I repeat, one of two conclusions to which we are compelled to come. Either God could not prevent the rebellion of the angels in heaven or the fall of Adam on earth, and all his posterity in him to the end of time, or He knowingly, and with his consent, permitted sin to enter heaven, and the earthly paradise in which our first parents

were placed. If the former alternative be preferred, then those who do so practically deny the omnipotence of Jehovah. There was a power both in heaven and in earth superior to or above his. If the second alternative be acquiesced in, then the benevolence of God can be successfully arraigned in permitting that sin which, having entered heaven, has entailed an amount of misery on those who did rebel against God, which is far too great for the human mind to comprehend. But that He *could* have prevented the introduction of moral evil into heaven is placed beyond all question, by the fact that He *did* prevent its infecting the great majority of the angels. No one will say, no one will for a moment suppose, that the same power which prevented a certain portion of the angels from sinning, could not have prevented all or any of them from falling. We are driven, therefore, to acquiesce in the other alternative case—namely, that God did not do in the matter what He could have done; and, if so, there is no more ground for charging God with a want of goodness and benevolence in ordaining eternal punishment for the wicked, that there is in his allowing moral evil, with all the frightful evils which follow in its train, to enter heaven or paradise on earth.

Not less is my reasoning true in relation to

the perpetuity of moral evil in the world. I should hardly have supposed that any one who believes in the existence and the government of God could be met with who doubts, much less denies, his possession of omnipotence in relation to the performance of any act not morally wrong. But I am especially surprised and deeply regret to find, that this should in effect be true of the Rev. T. R. Birks, formerly rector of Kelshall, now incumbent of Holy Trinity, Cambridge. Mr. Birks is not only one of the most intellectual men of the present day, and author of several works of high reputation, but is generally regarded as being, on most theological questions, as evangelical in his views as was his father-in-law, the late Rev. Edward Bickersteth. Those who are unacquainted with the fact will, I am sure, share with me, not only the surprise, but the grief which I feel in finding that in a work entitled "The Ways of God, or Thoughts on the Difficulties of Belief," published by Messrs. Seeley a few years ago, he devotes a chapter extending to thirty-five octavo pages, to prove that God is not Almighty in the sense of putting, even were He so disposed, an instantaneous end to the evil that exists in the world. Mr. Birks first makes a quotation from a divine, of whom he says that "he is an excellent and well-known

commentator," in which the sentence occurs :—
 "God could doubtless convert and save all devils, but He has wise reasons for not doing it. May He not be allowed to be good because He has not absolutely excluded all evil from creation, which He doubtless could have done?" Though I cannot at the moment verify the accuracy of my conviction, by a reference to the part of the works of the "excellent and well-known commentator" in which the words just quoted occur, I feel assured that the divine alluded to is the Rev. Thomas Scott. Mr. Birks, after making the extract which I have given, goes on to contend with great earnestness that it is morally impossible that God could, "by a momentary and sovereign fiat, turn this world of rebellion and of violence into one of angelic purity and perfection. The passage is rendered wholly illusive and unmeaning." The passage to which Mr. Birks here refers is the one in Genesis in which an intimation is made by Noah, that God was about to destroy the world by the flood because of the prevalence of sin and rebellion against Him. Noah expresses himself thus :—"And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at his heart."

In relation to this passage, Mr. Birks asks, "Why repent that God had made man upon the

earth, when if before the complaint could be uttered, a state of unmingled love and holiness, by a single Divine fiat, might be restored among all these millions of mankind ?” No words could more clearly limit the power of God than this language of Mr. Birks, or deny his ability to do a thing which is not only morally right in itself, but would, according to mere human views, constitute a glorious display of the Divine benevolence. That God has reasons which we shall ultimately see and acknowledge to be infinitely wise and good for permitting moral evil not only to have entered, but to have a prolonged existence in the world, is a point on which my conviction is as strong as it is on any other which could be named ; but that God does not possess the necessary power, were He so disposed, to perform the act to which Mr. Birks here alludes, is an altogether different thing from its not being his *pleasure* to do it. If God could not do this thing, it being admitted that there would be nothing morally wrong in the act, then those portions of Scripture must be received with certain limits which affirm that with God all things are possible ; that nothing is too hard for the Almighty ; that He doeth his pleasure in the armies of heaven and amongst the inhabitants of this earth. If, in short, Mr. Birks’s theory be sound, that God could not, even were he so disposed, ex-

tinguish moral evil and all its terrible consequences in the world by an instantaneous display of his power, then the Holy One of Israel not only may be, but *is* limited.

There is no escaping this conclusion from the words of Mr. Birks which I have quoted, and in accordance with which is the language of all the thirty-five pages of the chapter which, under the title of "The Long Continuance of Moral Evil," he has devoted to the subject in the work which I have named. That a man like Mr. Birks—that whom there are few more devout men in Christendom, or who have a more profound general reverence for the teaching of Scripture—should venture to advance such a proposition as that to which I am adverting, is another of the many instances which constantly come before us, of the lengths to which men may be carried, when one who has a strong inherent tendency to speculate on Divine mysteries, gives loose reins to the imagination, or, if the expression be preferred, relies on his own unassisted reasoning faculties.

The question will here be naturally asked, On what ground does Mr. Birks base his belief that God does not possess the power to instantaneously annihilate evil in his universe, by an exercise of his sovereignty, even were He so disposed? It is right that instead of stating in my own words

Mr. Birks's reasons for his faith on this point, I should allow him to render those reasons in his own language. "If," he says, "God had expressly revealed to us that his own omnipotence includes a power to convert and save all creatures, however perverse and rebellious, by a momentary act of the Divine will, and that for wise and mysterious reasons, He forbears to exercise this power, our duty would be humbly to receive the announcement, however perplexing to our faith in his goodness, and to wait in patience for the clearer revelations of the life to come."

This passage, let me here remark, is altogether inconsistent with what Mr. Birks says in other quotations I have made from his writings. It is indeed the great object of the chapter whence I have made those extracts to show that it would be morally impossible for God by his Divine fiat instantaneously to annihilate evil in the universe; but here he avows his readiness to believe in the power of God to perform such an act, were it only "revealed to us that God's own omnipotence includes a power to convert and save all creatures." He does not, however, believe that any such revelation has been made. "But since," he says, "in the course of a thousand messages from heaven no such statement can be found—and a solemn oath seems to imply the reverse—can it

be wise or safe to assume, as undoubted truth, that our first crude impressions of Divine omnipotence are its true definition, when they clash with impressions of the Divine goodness, no less natural and instructive, and even seem to destroy the force and emphasis of one of the most solemn and weighty of all these messages of God?" It may be true, as Mr. Birks states, that no such *specific* revelation—that is, no revelation, in so many words—is to be found in the Bible ; but there are numerous portions of Scripture in which the truth in question is emphatically and explicitly asserted, by implication. All those passages in the Bible which assert the omnipotence of God in relation to everything not morally wrong, include the power to instantaneously destroy evil and save a revolted world by his mere sovereign fiat. If, indeed that were not so, He would not be omnipotent ; He would not be the Almighty God which He is declared to be.

But there is another mode of dealing with this astounding notion of Mr. Birks,—astounding if believed and advanced even by any one, but especially so as brought forward by one who stands very high in the Christian world as a man of evangelical sentiments, which Mr. Birks has always had the deserved reputation of being. He rejects the idea of the power of God momen-

tarily to annihilate evil and save a ruined race ; because, he says, he can discern no such announcement among the thousands of messages which God has in his word conveyed to man. Has the unreasonableness of this belief never occurred to Mr. Birks, when among “the thousands of messages which have come from God to man,” there is no specific message of a contrary kind? Or will he contend that there are such messages? If so, will he point out even one of the number? Will he name one single portion of Scripture which asserts, even by implication, that God could not, did it so please Him, banish moral evil from his boundless universe by the mere exercise of his Sovereign will? If he cannot do this, every recognized canon of sound reasoning is at variance with his conclusion that he will not believe in the power of God to put an instantaneous end to moral evil.

I will only further ask Mr. Birks, how he will meet another argument against this strange, rather, I should say, startling notion,—that God does not possess the power in question. He admits the fact that by the preaching of Peter three thousand persons were converted in one day. Now, if by the outpouring of God’s Spirit that number of sinners were converted by one sermon, might not the whole world, if God so

willed it, be converted by the simultaneous employment of similar agencies? And supposing that all mankind, on being thus converted, were instantly to die, would not that fact constitute the annihilation of moral evil so far as the human race are concerned? We are told, indeed, that the time will come when nations shall be born in one day. And if God, by pouring out the influences of his Holy Spirit on all flesh, can and will accomplish such marvellous and glorious results as these, is it not presumption to limit the power of God, and say that He could not, even if He wished, destroy by his Divine fiat all the moral evil that exists in the universe? The notion that moral evil *must* of necessity be *gradually* destroyed, is one which receives no sanction from Scripture. To root out moral evil by degrees, or by means of some specific instrumentality, may be, and so far as we can see is, God's purpose; but we can discover no absolute or inexorable reason, in the nature of things, or out of God, why it should be so. Were it otherwise God would not be the Supreme Governor of the universe. Evil would be greater than God. He would not—I say it with all reverence—be a free Agent or an Omnipotent Being, but the subject of an extraneous necessity,—a supposition which would be incompatible with all our ideas of the nature and attributes of

God. The sole reason why He adopts a particular course is to be found in Himself. It is God's good and sovereign pleasure that the particular course of his dealing with the moral evil which we witness, should be adopted by Him. The words of Christ, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight," ought to be the language which we adopt in relation to this subject.

It may be supposed, that in thus referring to the views of Mr. Birks on this point, I have digressed from my subject. But however much it may seem to be so, it is not so in reality. My object in adverting at so much length to Mr. Birks's theory in relation to the permitted perpetuation of moral evil in the world, is to show that there is no more reason for arraigning the love and goodness of God because ordaining the endless duration of punishments in the next life, that there is in the fact, known and experienced by all mankind, that He allows moral evil, with all its physical attendant misery, to exist in the present life, when,—as I trust I have conclusively shown,—He might, if He pleased, put an end to it by the fiat of his Divine will. By the breathing of his mouth, the world, at first incomparably more fair and beautiful than we now behold it, was called into existence, and fitted in every way to be an abode of bliss to those who should be

its inhabitants, had they not sinned. By the word of his mouth He said, "Let there be light, and there was light." The very attributes too of God, as well as the utterances of Scripture, proclaim, in the most emphatic language, that God could, by a momentary act of his will, annihilate moral evil at once and for ever, just as He could have prevented its introduction to his universe. But He has not hitherto done it, and therefore there is no force in the argument that God is too good to punish eternally all those who perish in their guilt.

Each of the two great facts on which I have thus dwelt is a problem which no one can solve, not even the angels themselves. The one is as incomprehensible as the other. The explanation of both mysteries is reserved for another state of existence,—for that glorious world to come which is prepared for all the people of God, and in which we shall know even as we are known. We ought to be satisfied with God's own assurance that what we know not now we shall know hereafter. *Then* God will fully and triumphantly vindicate the goodness and wisdom of the manner in which He has administered the affairs of his moral government. There will not be an intelligent being in any part of His boundless empire who will not then admit his justice,

blended with benevolence, in all that He hath done. The universe will then see and confess that He has been holy in all his ways and righteous in all his works. And this no less in relation to the doctrine of eternal punishments than to all his other acts in the administration of his moral government. It will then be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the whole universe, that the dismal and irrevocable doom which will befall those who die in their sins, will be in perfect accord with God's infinite goodness and wisdom, as well as with his infinite justice. So that God's love or goodness may be arraigned in relation to a prolonged though limited duration of future punishments, with as much justice, as in relation to those who are destined "to suffer," in the language of Jude, "the vengeance of eternal fire." The consequence of that fearful frame of mind which leads men to arraign the rectitude of the Divine government, is, that it prompts some men practically to set themselves up as being, in the words of Pope, "the judge of God. It is a solemn fact, that this sin, the sin of seeking to be above God, is the same as that which brought ruin on the fallen angels and on our first parents. The poet hath well expressed this sentiment, when he says :—

"If seeking to be gods angels fell,
In seeking to be angels men rebel."

I know of no greater sin that could be committed by our race than the sin of practically arrogating to themselves the right of being considered wiser than God, and actually dictating to Him in what way he ought to administer the affairs of his moral government. And all those come under this condemnation who set up their reason and feelings in opposition to the plain emphatic utterances of that revelation of the Divine mind and will which God hath given us in the Bible. If such persons openly avowed their disbelief, as Deists do, in that book, as a revelation from God, or rejected certain portions of it, as is done by Unitarians, the thing would be different ; but those with whom I am now reasoning not only profess to receive the Old and New Testament as a volume specially inspired by the Holy Spirit, and as consequently infallible in all its doctrinal and other statements, but even go so far as to admit that the teaching of Scripture is in favour of the eternity of future punishments. With an astounding inconsistency they admit that the Bible does explicitly and emphatically teach the doctrine of the endless duration of that punishment, which those who are unpardoned in this world will have to bear in the world to come ; and yet they say in their hearts, and myriads say in words, that their judgments

and feelings rebel against the doctrine of endless punishment, and therefore they deliberately reject it. Such persons may talk as they will about receiving the Bible as the word of God, and may profess the most profound reverence for it, but in reality they do not regard it as a revelation at all, in the proper sense of the term, from Heaven. They will accept its teachings as far as they accord with their own feelings and judgments, but no farther. Practically they are guilty of the awful presumption of undertaking to instruct God, instead of receiving with all humility and gratitude, instruction from him. If such persons will reject certain truths which are taught in the Scriptures, that do not accord with their reason and feelings, let them at least be consistent. Let them take the preliminary step of discarding the book which teaches those truths, and not persist in saying that they receive it as a revelation of the mind and will of God, while they reject momentous doctrines which they themselves admit to be clearly taught in its pages.

Those who disbelieve the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments on the ground that an endless duration of such punishments is incompatible with the goodness of God, ought to remember thht there are other *facts*, as well as doctrines, which, to our minds, militate with

equal force against the character of God as a Being of boundless benevolence. The introduction of moral evil into the universe, or a portion of it, and the Divine permission for its continuance, are equally, to our apprehension, unenlightened by the Scriptures, at variance with the goodness of God.

I pause for a brief period in the course of the arguments I am advancing, to advert to an important collateral phase of the question. It is a fact which ought to weigh much with any one whose mind may not be made up on the great question as to whether or not future punishments are to be eternal,—that those who reject the doctrine of the endless duration of such punishments, do not, as a body, nor even in any considerable numbers, pretend to say that the Scriptures contain any positive evidence in favour of a limited duration of punishments in a future state of being. Their arguments against the eternity of the punishment of the ungodly hereafter, go no further than an attempt to show that, in various instances, the words and phrases which we adduce as proving the doctrine of eternal punishments, are either incorrectly rendered from the original languages, or that we attach a meaning to them which they cannot legitimately be made to bear. I have dealt with this phase of

the question in my previous chapters. It is a great concession to us, and ought to lead those who reject the doctrine of the endless duration of punishments in a future state, to reconsider the conclusion to which they have come. If their view were correct, it surely is strange that some portions of Scripture cannot be referred to, which give it even the semblance of a sanction. They have no positive evidence, according to their own admission, in favour of a limited period of future punishment. It is at best, even taking their own view of it, but a kind of negative evidence. The farthest they can go is to deny those passages of Scripture which we hold to be conclusive as to the eternity of the misery of the wicked, and which constitute unanswerable proof that such is the doctrine of the Bible. It is not for us poor ignorant creatures to presume in any way to say to what extent, and on what subjects, God ought to enlighten our darkness, but from what we know of Him, as He is revealed in his Word, we surely do but render Him honour, when we infer that on any point so manifestly involving his own glory and inconceivably momentous to the whole of the human race, He would not have withheld from us some unmistakeable intimations of the fact, if such it were, that the punishments to be inflicted on the wicked in a future state will not

be eternal in their duration. The only passage which a few of the disbelievers in the everlasting duration of future punishments bring forward in support of their theory, is the one in which Christ says that the servant who knew his lord's will and did it not was beaten with many stripes, while he who did it not because he knew it not was beaten with few stripes. In a previous chapter I have shown that this illustration by our Lord of the difference there is in the sinfulness of things which are done in the full light of knowledge, and those which are done in the darkness of ignorance, refers to the degree, not the duration of the punishment which will be inflicted. This accords with the expression, "the lowest hell," which we meet with in more than one place in the Scriptures,—an expression which clearly denotes that there are parts in the place of future punishment in which the misery will be greater than in others. Besides, the principle of analogy in relation to what will be the state of things in heaven, is also in harmony with this view of the portion of Scripture to which I am adverting. It is a clearly revealed truth in the Bible that there will be degrees of happiness, or rewards of different kinds in heaven, just as one star in the firmament differeth from another star in glory. On the same principle of analogy

reason would lead us to expect, just as Scripture affirms the fact, that—though there will be a difference in degree of the glory and bliss of the inhabitants of the world above, there will be no termination in one single case to the happiness of heaven—so there will be no end, not even in one solitary instance, to the punishment of those to whom Christ will say, on the great day of judgment, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

There is another consideration which I have not met with in any books on the subject, but which weighs much with me in support of my belief in the eternity of future punishments. It is this,—that those who repudiate the idea of the never-ending punishment of the ungodly, cannot furnish us with any information as to the period during which future punishments will last. Some of their number say that the Greek word *αἰών*, which in our translation is rendered “everlasting,” may mean either a few days, or weeks, or years, or a period sufficiently prolonged to far exceed, in length of time, the powers of arithmetic to compute. So that the doctrine of future punishments may mean the punishment of the ungodly, for only a few days, or weeks, or years, preparatory to their restoration to holiness, and their introduction to heaven as their eternal

abiding place ; or it may embrace countless millions of ages.

There can be no doubt which of these two alternative destinies all the ungodly would prefer, provided they had their choice. Nor can there be any doubt that our corrupt nature, finding the former to be most congenial to it would, with a marvellous facility, reason itself into the belief that the shorter, or a very short period, will be the actual period. "The wish," to use the words of the poet, "being father to the thought," all would embrace the belief of a very brief period of punishment. Need I state the inevitable practical result on the lives of mankind ? Would not the fact of believing that future punishments are appointed to end almost as soon as they begin to be inflicted, prove destructive of that deterring power from the commission of sin, which a belief in the eternity of future punishments is calculated to exercise on the minds of those who addict themselves to habits of reflection.

But this is a point to which I shall have occasion to recur hereafter. In the meantime, let me beg the serious attention of those who have been led to embrace a belief in the termination, sooner or later, of punishments in a future state, to one of the inevitable consequences of that belief. If their views on the point are

right, then there is no resisting the conclusion that, so far as regards the duration of future punishments, the Bible, which we otherwise receive as a revelation from God, is no revelation at all. Now, would this be like the character of God? Could it be, as I have already remarked, that there should not be one word from the beginning to the end of the Scriptures, from which any one could even form a conjecture—to say nothing of conviction—as to whether the punishments of the ungodly in that future state which is before us all, will last for only a few days, or endure for a greater number of ages than there are sands on the sea-shore,—for their rendering of the phrase “everlasting punishment” includes either meaning? Any one whose mind is unbiassed by preconceived opinions, and uninfluenced by particular theories, must admit that to leave the world in a state of entire uncertainty on a matter so momentous that the mind fails to form even a conception of its importance, would be altogether at variance with our views otherwise of the Divine character. God has been graciously pleased to furnish us with specific information on other points which cannot for a moment be compared in importance with that of the duration of future punishments. The presumption is consequently so strong as

almost to amount to proof, that if it were his purpose that the misery of the wicked in another world will be of limited duration, he would, by some of his inspired servants, have given us some intimation to that effect. But there is not a single utterance in God's Word which gives even a seeming sanction to such a belief.

THE DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENTS.

PART SIXTH.

THE space which I have already given to a consideration of the duration of future punishments has exceeded what I meant to have devoted to the subject, but it is one of such inconceivable importance, that it will justify any amount of attention which may be necessary for its full discussion in all its varied phases.

I have adverted at no inconsiderable length to the argument against eternal misery derived from the goodness of God ; but much remains to be said on the bearing of the Divine benevolence on the question of future punishments. The two authors of eminence who have most ably and elaborately argued against the doctrine of endless misery—grounding their reasonings on the “goodness of God,”—are Dr. Hartley, author of “Observations on Man,” and the late Dr. Southwood Smith, author of “Illustrations of the Divine Government.” As a period of three

quarters of a century intervened between these two advocates of the ultimate salvation of all mankind, and as Dr. Southwood Smith had the advantage over Dr. Hartley, of making himself acquainted with whatever transpired in the interim in favour of the Universalist theory, it will only be doing justice to Universalism, to deal with Dr. Smith's arguments in favour of that system, derived from the character of God as a God of love.

Dr. Southwood Smith sets out with the proposition, or rather the assumption, that "for the same reason that the Deity designed to make *one* human being happy, He must have ultimately proposed to bestow felicity ultimately on *all*." This is an assumption which is not, without certain qualifications, warranted either by Scripture, or observation, or experience. It is begging the question, and nothing more. That God in the creation alike of angels and of men, intended that they should be happy, no one who is acquainted with the Scriptures will deny, inasmuch as we know that both angels and men were perfectly happy when they dropped from His creative hand. But God did not engage that either the one order of intelligences or the other, should continue in a state of happiness, in the event of their rebellion against Him,

or their disobedience to his revealed will. A large proportion of the angels in heaven *did* revolt against God, and consequently were expelled from heaven and cast into hell, to be there indescribably miserable; and *all* mankind being federally represented in the person of their first parent, forfeited by the fall of Adam, the favour of God, and were made not only miserable here, but amenable to the Divine displeasure in the world to come. Both angels and men therefore thus frustrated the benevolent purpose of God towards them. This compels me briefly to revert to topics on which I touched in my last chapter. The rebellion in the case of angels, and mankind's disobedience in the person of Adam, were purely their own acts,—voluntary acts, and consequently neither order of intelligences could charge God with any purpose or act at variance with his boundless benevolence.

Let, then, the great truth go forth to the ends of the earth—a truth to which every man's conscience bears its decided testimony, wherever man has an enlightened conscience—that fallen angels, as well as all mankind, were originally made upright and happy, and, that both the one and the other order of beings “sought out many inventions,” they would have remained so. To them alone is to be ascribed the fact, that the

“gold hath become dim, and the most fine gold changed.” Their guilt and consequent misery lie at their own door, and cannot be ascribed to any purpose of God. He willed, when He put forth his creating power in calling them into existence, that they should remain as He made them, perfectly holy, which would have been a guarantee of their continuing perfectly happy for ever and ever.

Dr. Southwood Smith, in the same chapter to which I am adverting, and which is entitled “The Universality of the Divine Benevolence,” lays down the proposition that creation and Providence equally prove that God’s comprehensive goodness embraces *all mankind alike*. He rejects the notion that even in this world God shows any special favour to any one. To use his own words, “Every principle of the human understanding revolts at the conclusion that He is partial and capricious in his kindness, and has designed to make some individuals happy and others miserable. This,” he adds, “is equally opposed by all the appearances in nature. It is refuted by every object to which we can direct our attention. The sun, in the brightness of his glory, diffuses light and joy through all the nations of the earth. God has no favourite to bless.”

Of course it could not be otherwise, even had Dr. Southwood Smith, a man of cultivated mind, and eminent for his intellectual and theological studies, not stated the fact, that he was intimately conversant with Butler's "Analogy between Natural and Revealed Religion." It is strange, therefore, that, with that great work present to his mind, Dr. Southwood Smith could have ever advanced the proposition, that God acts alike in nature and providence towards all mankind. But he needed not to go beyond the sphere of his own observation and experience, to be satisfied of the utter groundlessness of that notion. Some of the human race spend most miserable lives, owing to circumstances over which they have no control, from the time they are put into their cradle until they are placed in their coffin; while others, not through any merit of their own, but simply on account of the circumstances in which they have been placed by Providence, enjoy all worldly comforts from the moment in which they drew their first breath until they had breathed their last. The life of the one class has been, from beginning to end, one of unintermitting misery; that of the other has been unvarying happiness of the highest order, in the sense in which the world understands the term. And yet, I repeat, not only has there been no special

demerit in the former, nor any special merit in the latter. The reverse, indeed, is often the case. The most miserable because the greatest sufferers, are often the most virtuous; while those the most prosperous in the world's phraseology, and in every respect the most favoured, are often to be found amongst the most immoral of our race. These are facts which no Universalist who shares Dr. Southwood Smith's views as to the Divine benevolence can deny. They are patent to all whose eyes and ears are open to what is passing in the every-day scenes of that great drama which is being enacted in the vast theatre of the world around us. What, then, becomes of the favourite hypothesis—for it evidently was a favourite belief with Dr. Smith—that, because of the Lord's impartial benevolence, He has no favourites, and makes no distinction in relation to individuals, in the bestowment of his divine blessings in this world?

It is true Dr. Smith afterwards seeks, in some slight degree, to modify his views on the point; but the effort, instead of being successful, only makes matters much worse for his argument. "Nowhere in nature," he says, "are there traces of a partial God. Some inequalities, indeed, appear in the distribution of his bounty, but this must necessarily be the case if creatures are

formed with different capacities, and endowed with different degrees of excellence." But then the question presents itself,—To whom are these "inequalities," these "different capacities," these "different degrees of excellence," to be ascribed? There can be but one answer to the question. Men themselves are not the authors of them; they all come from God. He, therefore, according to Dr. Southwood Smith's theory, is proved, from the very fact of God's forming his creatures with different capacities and endowing them with different degrees of excellence, to be, in the language of that Universalist—not in my language, for I object to the phraseology—"partial and capricious in his kindness." And if this be so—if it be true that God can act thus in relation to mankind in the present world, surely the fact is fatal to Dr. Smith's hypothesis respecting the Divine benevolence in his dealings with his creatures in the world to come.

Dr. Smith afterwards abandons, in effect, in another form, his theory that all mankind, and the brute creation too, are, within certain limitations, which it is difficult to comprehend as they are put by him, exceedingly, if not supremely, happy in this world. He dilates in eloquent terms on that assumed happiness, and thence infers that though the wicked will, in some sense

or other, be punished in a future state, they will be comforted by the assurance that after a certain period of suffering, more or less prolonged, they will be restored to purity and bliss. I feel that no other answer is needed to this than that which the Apostle Paul supplies, when he says, that the *whole* creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now. If, then, Dr. Smith's premises are thus swept away by one stroke of Paul's pen, moved by the Spirit of God, where is the worth of his conclusion, that ultimately all will be restored to purity, and be made for ever happy in heaven? If, as Dr. Smith affirms is the fact, mankind and the lower animals experience a far greater amount of happiness than of misery, then the curse pronounced by God on man and beast, as well as on the inanimate creation, at the time when Adam fell, has not taken effect, and consequently God has not been faithful to his threatenings. And if this be so, what guarantee do his people possess that He will be faithful to his promises to them?

Hitherto I have made but a passing reference to the revolt of the angels in heaven, and their consequent expulsion from their abodes in those blissful regions. In some respects there is something more incomprehensible in their rebellion against God than in the fall of man. They

had dwelt for an indefinite period—it may be for countless ages—in the special presence of God. They enjoyed communion with Him of a far higher order than Adam was ever privileged to possess. They had tasted of heaven's happiness, in a measure too great for us to form any idea of its degree. Their natures were immeasurably more exalted than the nature of Adam; and we know of no temptation to which they were exposed, and by which they were overcome. Yet they fell, and were not only, in consequence, expelled from heaven, but consigned to the lake of fire prepared for them and their leaders in the great rebellion.

Is it not to our poor limited capacities in relation to the comprehension of Divine mysteries, very surprising that God should have permitted, when He could have prevented, the entrance of evil into heaven, and thus have imposed on Him the inexorable moral necessity of banishing the angels for ever from his presence, and from all the glory and bliss of the celestial state, and causing them to be placed in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day, then to be consigned to the blackness of darkness for ever? I ask those who share Dr. Southwood Smith's notions relative to the goodness of God, and who, because of their faith in that goodness cannot believe in

eternal misery, how can they reconcile the Divine benevolence with the doom of the fallen angels? The thing cannot be done, and therefore Universalists have no right to maintain that the goodness of God is a guarantee against the eternal duration of punishment in that state of being which is to succeed the present.

There is another circumstance connected with the introduction of moral evil into the world, to which I have not adverted, and yet it is one of great importance. The simple act of eating an apple, which was growing on a forbidden tree in the garden of Eden, was the act which introduced sin into our world, and by which, as Paul says, "Many"—the word "many" here meaning "all"—"were made sinners." Now that the fact of simply taking an apple off a particular tree and eating it, should have drawn down the Divine displeasure, not only on Adam himself, but on all his posterity in all time coming, is a thing which appears so incomprehensible to us, and is regarded as being at such utter variance alike with the benevolence and the justice of God, that the very idea has driven millions into Atheism. As, therefore, such difficulties as these surround the circumstances under which sin came into our world, and all the appalling misery of which sin has been, and will to the end of time, be the

parent,—I hold that the opponents of endless punishment in a future state have no right to argue against those punishments on the ground that they would be incompatible with the goodness of God.

But there yet remains to be considered another important point in connection with the fall of our first parents. God not only permitted the tempter to enter Paradise, but he so constituted Adam that he was, as the event proved, liable to fall. So marked indeed was the peccability of his nature, or his liability to be overcome by temptation, that he seems to have become Satan's victim on the very first assault being made on his integrity. Now God, when He created Adam, knew the constitution of his moral nature, and that consequently his fall was inevitable. Yet He did inflict on Adam a fearful punishment for this one sin, which seems to mere reason a sin of the smallest proportions of which one can form a conception. What staggers human reason even yet more, is the fact that the whole creation was from that time to this cursed, and will be less or more while the world lasts, for that one act of plucking an apple and eating it, which grew on a particular tree. That the whole brute creation were cursed for Adam's transgression was clearly proved when God, addressing the serpent that

tempted Adam, said :—“ Because thou hast done this thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field.” The words clearly affirm that all the brute creation were cursed because of Adam’s sin. Nor did even inanimate creation escape the consequences of our first parents’ transgression. “ Cursed,” said God to Adam, when he had partaken of the forbidden fruit, “ is the ground for thy sake.” And we see every day of our lives the deplorable proofs of the Divine curse resting on both the brute and the inanimate creation. Dr. Southwood Smith dilates in glowing terms, and so do Universalists generally, on the happiness of mankind, and of the brute creation here. The assumption is wholly unsupported by facts. What we witness around us, where the influences of the gospel are not felt, proves beyond all controversy that the curse rests alike on man and beast. The words of Paul are, I repeat, true to the letter :—“ the *whole* creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain till now.” I ask, therefore, that those who share Dr. Southwood Smith’s views in relation to God’s goodness or benevolence, as a proof that the punishment of the wicked in a future state will not be everlasting, to reconcile, if they can, the Divine benevolence with the universal sorrow and suffering,—in other words, the universal misery which prevails

in the world. If God be all, in relation to goodness, that the Universalists say,—if He is as just as they admit He is, how can it ever have come to pass that the poor brute creation, that never sinned, are now groaning, and ever have groaned, and ever will groan while the world lasts, under God's curse, because of Adam's sin, not because of any transgression of their own? I hold it impossible that this great fact can be any more reconciled with the justice or benevolence of God, than can be the eternity of future punishments. Many men, eminent for their Christian piety, have so fully felt the force of this, that they have been driven to the necessity of seeking, like Dr. Adam Clarke, refuge in the belief that all the brute creation will ultimately be received into heaven, to be eternally blessed and glorified there, as a compensation for their suffering on earth.

The next argument against the never-ending duration of future punishments, to which Dr. Southwood Smith attaches next greatest importance, and on which he most emphatically dwells, is that as the object of all punishments, both human and divine, is corrective, future punishments cannot be eternal. This is perhaps the principal argument which is now used by the Universalists in America against the endlessness

of misery in the next world ; and Dr. Southwood Smith's language is often quoted by them in their discussions on the subject. The assumption that the design of all punishments is invariably the reformation of the offender, is altogether unwarranted. In very many cases, equally in human and Divine government, no such object is contemplated, nor, indeed in the nature of things, could be. The punishment annexed to various crimes in the administration of human governments, is of a kind which does not admit of the reformation of the criminal. The punishment of the murderer is death, and his execution is ordered to take place in a few days after sentence has been passed upon him. His reformation, therefore, in the social acceptation of the word, neither takes place nor is contemplated. For certain other offences of an aggravated kind, but to which the capital penalty is not attached, the criminal is sentenced to banishment for life. The idea of the reformation of such offenders never enters the mind of the administrator of our law. The punishment in both these cases is purely penal. Equally so it is with regard to other prolonged periods of banishment or imprisonment. And no less so is it, in many cases, with regard to the administration of the Divine government.

All Universalists know as well as we do, although it seems to be forgotten by them, in their opposition to the doctrine of never-ending misery hereafter, that, under the Mosaic dispensation, men were to be put to death for various offences which we should consider comparatively light. The case of gathering sticks on the Sabbath-day may be mentioned as one in point. Now God could not in such cases have designed the reformation of the offender by the punishment inflicted. The capital punishment annexed to the transgression was to be immediately carried into effect. There was not, therefore, and could not be, anything of a corrective or reformatory nature in the infliction of that punishment. Its design was solely penal. This I hold is manifestly and entirely fatal to the argument of Dr. Southwood Smith, and those more modern Universalists who share his views,—that all Divine punishments are corrective or reformatory in relation to the offender, and that consequently the future punishment of the ungodly has that object in view, and that when the object is accomplished, those who were its subjects will be restored to happiness and be made heirs of heaven.

Dr. Southwood Smith is one of those Universalists who admit that the torments of the un-

godly, in their place of punishment hereafter, will not only be severe beyond any conception which we can form on the subject, but that they may be so prolonged as to be beyond our capacity to calculate their duration. He quotes Dr. John Prior Estlin, of Bristol, as sharing his views of the lengthened duration of future punishments. Dr. Estlin was one of the ablest and most intellectual writers in favour of ultimate universal restoration, in the early part of the present century. Dr. Smith prefaces his remarks respecting Dr. Estlin's views, by representing him as one of the most benevolent and humane men the world ever saw. He was before my day, and therefore I was not personally acquainted with him ; but I can indorse everything Dr. Southwood Smith says respecting his intellectual character, his exalted benevolence, and his great moral worth in all respects, because it was my privilege to be, for many years on terms of the most intimate friendship with his son, the second late Dr. Estlin, of Bristol, and who was, socially and morally, a transcript of his father. I allude particularly to the exceeding great benevolence of Dr. Prior Estlin, in conjunction with that of Dr. Southwood Smith himself, for the purpose of pointing out what appears to me incomprehensible,—that two such men could delight to dwell

on the Divine benevolence, on the supposition that future punishments will not be eternal, although possibly lasting for millions of ages, and yet be filled with absolute horror in the contemplation of the Supreme Being, if the misery of the lost is to be endless.

But it is due to those who share the views, on this aspect of the question, of Dr. Estlin and Dr. Smith, that the latter speaking for the former as well as for himself, should be allowed to express himself in his own words. In his book, "Illustrations of the Divine Government," from which I have already quoted somewhat largely, Dr. Smith, addressing the believers in eternal punishments on this phase of the question, says:—"But supposing that you are perfectly satisfied with regard to your own condition, are your anxieties confined to your own welfare, and do you care only for yourself? Are you a father; are you a mother? Do you love your children, and do you really think of the doctrines you profess to believe? If so, how can you possibly be happy? In imagination, I often accompany you into the bosom of your family. I see your eye rest with anxious fondness on your smiling babes. I see the tear start to it. I do not wonder at it. I should be less surprised did your tears unceasingly flow, and were your very

hearts to break. The child of whom you are so fond, whose innocence affects and whose prattle delights you, what will be its eternal destiny? What uncertainty is there! What horror may be there! If, when you are in Abraham's bosom, you should look beyond the gulph which divides you, and behold it lifting up its eyes in torments, and imploring you in vain for a cup of cold water to quench its parched tongue; if you should know that this state of dreadful misery will be without end, and that its sufferings will answer no purpose, would heaven afford you the least enjoyment. Could you contemplate with complacency the Author of its misery? Could you surround his throne with songs of praise, exclaiming in grateful triumph, 'Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth'?"

This is, doubtless, a powerful appeal to our natural feelings; and did we not know that the principles on which God will administer the affairs of his moral government hereafter, in that eternity into which we shall all, ere long, be introduced, will be just and good, it would be a source of most painful perplexity to us to reconcile our own happiness with the extreme misery of those who were the nearest and dearest to us when on earth. I admit that, with our present limited knowledge of God's dealings

with his creatures in a future state, the difficulty which Dr. Southwood Smith puts to us is one which we cannot explain. All we can do is to fall back on God's Word, which declares that the Judge of all the earth will, as He must of necessity, do right, and that while we here only see as through a glass darkly, we shall then see face to face, and know even as we are known. It is the Divine promise that, when the people of God have crossed the threshold of the regions of celestial light, they shall know all things. God will then have no secrets from those who in this world feared his name.

But there is another mode of dealing with this objection of Dr. Southwood Smith to the endless duration of future punishments. As I have more than once mentioned, he sees no incompatibility between the character of God as a Being of infinite benevolence, and the prolongation of the most intolerable torments in the next world to any period, the duration of which falls short of eternity. Must not, then, according to Dr. Smith's views, all the inhabitants of heaven, redeemed from among men, be inexpressibly miserable during the millions of ages that may intervene before the restoration of their friends and relatives to holiness and happiness? How, according to Dr. Smith's notions could they be

expected to be happy in heaven all those indefinite number of ages which are to take place, during which the smoke of the torments of husbands, wives, parents, children, and others that were inexpressibly dear to them on earth, will be ascending! Heaven, in the supposed case, and according to Dr. Smith's views, ought to be no heaven to any of the spirits of the just made perfect, who had loved relations or friends on earth, until they have one and all been released from their torments in the prison of the lost, however distant in the ages of eternity that period may be. If, as he says,—I think in very injudicious language,—that were the doctrine of endless misery hereafter, true, heaven itself would be converted into hell, because of the sorrow of those in heaven for the misery of their friends and relations in the place of torment, on the same principle, heaven ought only to be heaven in name, and the opposite place in reality, until the universal restoration in which our opponents believe has been accomplished. Yet, as I have just said, it does not seem to concern the Universalists in the least, that the torments of hell may have to be endured through countless millions of ages; nor does the fact appear to diminish in their eyes, in the slightest degree, the goodness of God.

How this can be, is wholly beyond my powers of comprehension. Do we not feel in this world intense pain and sorrow when those inexpressibly precious to us are writhing in bodily agonies, were it only even for an hour? And yet the Universalists of our day, sharing Dr. Southwood Smith's views on this subject, can contemplate, without the slightest emotion, those most beloved by them in this world being subjected in the world to come to intolerable torments, without one moment's intermission, for countless millions of years. All they ask is that we should concede to them that the misery of the ungodly in the future state will not endure through all eternity. To my mind there is something equally unnatural and inconsistent in this. I should like to see how, on their principles, they can reconcile their theory with that boundless benevolence of the Divine Being on which it is their delight to dwell,—even to the exclusion of his other attributes of holiness and justice.

I am disinclined, were it only in consideration of my limited space, to prolong the discussion with those Universalists who endorse the particular arguments of Dr. Southwood Smith; but as the one which is based on the assumption

that the future punishments inflicted on the ungodly will not be penal, but purely corrective, is that on which most stress appears to be laid, I must make one or two further observations on that point. I hold that idea to be demonstrably disproved by one great fact with which we are all familiar. Satan and his angels have, we know, been for at least six thousand years suffering all the intense agonies of hell. But, though we have no specific information as to when they were expelled from heaven and cast down to hell, because of their rebellion against God, they may have been—probably they were—in their present dismal prison millions of years before Adam was created. It will, however, suffice for my argument that we *know* from the Scriptures, that the Devil and his angels have been in chains of darkness, in the prison prepared for them, for six thousand years. And yet we know, equally from the same infallible source, that not only have they undergone no correction or improvement till the present time, but that even after Satan has been subjected to a new and probably still more terrible punishment during the thousand years that he is destined, at some future period of our earth's history, to be shut up in the bottomless pit—he will come out of

that fearful pit, not reformed, not improved in any way, but, on the contrary, that he will be more malignant against God and man than at any previous period of his history. And what will be true of him will be no less so of all his angels. They are to go forth over the breadth of the earth more determined on the execution of their diabolical purposes than ever. And as we know that up to a certain period—which may extend over myriads of years to come—Satan and his angels will become worse and worse, and thus, by unceasingly adding to their guilt, necessarily increasing the displays of the Divine displeasure,—I hold that these facts, which cannot be disputed, scatter the corrective or reformatory theory to the winds, and constitute an argument which cannot be answered for the eternity of the punishments to be inflicted in a future state.

But I must not devote any more of my space to the objections urged against the doctrine of eternal misery by Dr. Southwood Smith. I have adverted to some of these objections because they have been generally allowed to be more forcibly put by him than by the generality of those who hold his views relative to ultimate universal restitution.

Among the latest proofs which our modern religious literature has furnished relative to the prevalence of the disbelief in endless misery among Church of England theological writers, clerical and lay, a striking one is to be found in a volume published a few months ago by Macmillan and Co. Its title is, "Essays on Church Policy," edited by the Rev. W. L. Clay, M.A., Incumbent of Bamhill, Lancashire. It may, in a sense, be regarded as a second volume of "Essays and Reviews," only that its contents are contributed by other hands. Among the writers is Mr. J. R. Seeley, author of "Ecce Homo." Now, out of the six writers who contribute the matter of which this volume consists, no fewer than half the number openly and emphatically reject the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments. The other three, I have no doubt, do the same. The Rev. T. W. Fowle, Curate of Holy Trinity, Hoxton, is the first in the list of these contributors. One of his chief arguments against the eternity of future punishments is, that "the doctrine is hated by the common people." And *this* fact is, I suppose, to be seriously regarded as fatal to the doctrine. I should imagine that it is an argument which conducts to just the contrary conclusion. Cor-

rupt human nature must needs hate whatever threatens the sinner with a severe punishment in a future state. Is not, indeed, *every* doctrine hated that threatens the sinner with punishment of any kind? Was not the Gospel of Christ itself "hated" by the world in the days of our Saviour's sojourn on earth? Was not He Himself "hated," scorned, reviled, rejected? Is it not, then, strange that one who sustains the office of a minister of Christ should hold it to be a proof of the groundlessness of any doctrine, that it should be "hated" by the majority of mankind?

One of the three contributors to this volume who advocate the doctrine of the non-eternity of future punishments is Mr. John Westlake, Barrister-at-Law.

"Since," he says, "it has been admitted that reformation is an indispensable end, in human systems of punishments, it has become impossible to believe at the same time in the eternity of Divine punishment and in the omnipotence of the Deity." I regard this as nothing less than blasphemy. It is what Pope calls virtually making ourselves—the veriest insects in point of intellect—judges of that great and glorious Being who is infinite in all perfections, whose know-

ledge is boundless, whose presence fills the immensity of space, and who, as the Judge of all the earth, must do right. But Mr. Westlake is wrong in one of his leading facts, at the very moment that he is, in effect, arrogating to himself such an amount of knowledge with regard to the purposes and plans of God, as can be possessed by Him alone, if it be not revealed in the Bible. Daily observation, as well as all history, proves this writer to be in error when he says that *reformation* is an indispensable end in human systems of punishments. Are not capital punishments, as I in effect before remarked, appointed here as the penalty inflicted on persons convicted of certain crimes? Is Mr. Westlake, then, prepared to include the gallows amongst the instruments of *reformation*? Is *reformation* of an offender intended by the judge when he sentences him to be hanged? Is *reformation* accomplished when the public executioner has carried the extreme penalty of the law into effect?

But the editor of the volume goes, in some respects, even further than his contributors in relation to the doctrine of future punishments. "A generation hence," says the Rev. W. L. Clay, "educated Christians will be as incapable of believing in endless perdition as they now are in believing in the diurnal revolution of the sun

round the earth.” Translated into somewhat simpler English, the conviction which Mr. Clay here expresses is, that before the lapse of thirty years, there will not be found a well-informed Christian in the world who believes in the eternity of future punishments. There is assuredly surpassing presumption in that prediction. By what process, we should like to know, has Mr. Clay acquired this certain knowledge relative to the state, thirty years hence, of universal faith and feeling with regard to the duration of future punishments? We are curious to receive an answer to the question, but we do not expect to get one. No,—that day will never come, if the Scriptures be true. There will always, so long as the Gospel dispensation shall last, be a goodly number who will receive the Bible with reverence as the Word of God; and, seeing the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments to be therein clearly revealed, they will put implicit faith in that part of Divine revelation as in every other portion of the holy oracles.

So far from the non-eternity of future punishments being universally rejected thirty years hence, we confidently expect there will, before then, be a reaction in favour of the doctrine. But even were the time ever to come when it shall be otherwise,—even were the day ever to arrive when the whole

world, without the exception of a single individual, will disbelieve and deny the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments, that would not make the doctrine less true, any more than the ignorance of the existence of God amongst millions of his creatures in the dark places of the earth, is to be regarded as a proof that there is no God. The question is not what men believe: it is what God says in the volume of revelation which He has vouchsafed to us.

One great argument with all Universalists in opposition to endless punishments is, What benevolent purpose can they answer? That is nothing more nor less than asking us to sit in judgment on God. It is, in effect, calling on us to bring Him to our bar. I dare not presume to speculate on the point. I am contented to have for the ground of my belief in the never-ending misery of the lost, that I have for it a "Thus saith the Lord,"—not in one but in many portions of Scripture. But though I will not dogmatically, nor, indeed, at all, venture to give a reason for God's annexing an eternal penalty to sin, I can conceive in my own mind that one great reason for that awful penalty may be, in relation to fallen angels, that by expelling them from heaven, and consigning them to everlasting chains of darkness in the opposite state, the warning furnished by their awful doom

may be the very means employed by God to preserve the countless throng of angels, who did not join in their rebellion, from losing their love and loyalty to their Celestial Sovereign. In like manner, with regard to the fall of our first parents, and that fearful load of woe, both here and hereafter, which it has entailed on mankind, who can tell but that there may be innumerable other innocent rational beings in those countless other planets which constitute the system of God's illimitable universe, who may, by the fate here and hereafter, of the ungodly in this world, be preserved from acts of disobedience to the Great Supreme, which would incur his eternal displeasure?

But, be this as it may, there is at least one great benefit which we know to be derived from the doctrine of eternal punishments. The fear of that dreadful doom has a most salutary effect in deterring mankind from exposing themselves by persistence in a course of sin, to the eternal wrath of God. Those who reject the doctrine of everlasting misery do, with comparatively few exceptions, admit that those who believe in them have the clearest views and the deepest sense of the evil of sin, and consequently must, in the nature of things, be the most careful to avoid sin in whatever form it may present itself. This is,

in the nature of things, so very obvious—it is, indeed, so inevitable a consequence resulting from certain premises, that there is no need for reasoning on the subject. Besides, the biographies of the “excellent of the earth” furnish an overwhelming amount of proof of the fact, that the holiest and best men that ever trod our world have been believers in the endless duration of future punishment, and have ascribed to their conviction of the truth of that doctrine, their watchfulness against temptation, and their consequent preservation from falling into it, followed of necessity by their escaping the fearful never-ending consequences of sin.

But Dr. Southwood Smith does not content himself with arguing against unending punishments on the ground of the benevolence or goodness of God, as an abstract principle. He asserts and re-asserts, under every possible form of phraseology, that not only is the great end which God contemplates in the administration of his moral government, the ultimate good of all the rational creatures He has made, but that that end will be accomplished. In order to be consistent with this portion of his religious creed, Dr. Smith ought to include the whole of the irrational creation as the destined recipients of unending happiness ; but this he does not do. He

confines the prospective universal good which his hypothesis has in store, to God's intelligent creatures. But even in favour of the latter he is not able to adduce one single passage of Scripture which affirms, in so many unmistakable words, that they will all be ultimately restored to purity and happiness. There are hundreds of passages in the Bible which assert in substance what Paul says of God's people, namely, that all things work together for good "to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," but it is only to them. There is not, so far as I know, a single text in the inspired volume which expressly promises good, either here or hereafter, to any but God's people. So far from this, the very opposite is declared regarding the ungodly. What language could be more plain, what more awful respecting the destiny of the wicked in a future state, than that of Paul, when he represents the wicked as "treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." The full manifestation of the Divine wrath will begin to be made on the day of judgment, and we do not hear of that "day of wrath" ever coming to an end. Not one word is said in any part of the Bible of the love, or the goodness, or the mercy of God to those who have perished in

their guilt after the day of judgment; but, on the other hand, we meet in hundreds of places with passages which prove conclusively that the sentences pronounced at the judgment-seat on the ungodly, will be irrevocable. It is in the contemplation of that development of the Divine indignation that the apostle says of sinners, that the wrath of God abideth on them. *Abideth* on them! Appalling words! It will never be removed. It will *abide* on them for ever.

Our great test of the truth or otherwise of any particular doctrine or creed, is the influence which it has on human character. "A tree," said our Lord, "is known by its fruits." Apply this test to the doctrine of eternal punishments, and see what will be the result. Are the believers in that doctrine less estimable members of society than those who reject it? The voice of history, as well as the language of experience and observation emphatically answer the question in the negative. In a religious sense, are believers in unending misery less exemplary than those who believe in a limited duration of future punishments? We again appeal with all confidence to history, to what we see around us, and to what we feel within us for an answer in the negative. Who have been the originators of Bible and missionary societies, and

who their supporters, whether in this country or in the United States of America? Not certainly Unitarians or Universalists, not the rejectors of the doctrine of everlasting punishments in a future state, but the believers in that doctrine. This is a great fact. It is one which never has been and never can be controverted. And so with regard to the effect which the doctrine of endless misery has on personal piety. Search the world over, and nowhere will any people be found who are more pious, more moral, and in every respect more exemplary, than the people of Scotland, and yet, no matter to what denomination they may belong, they are almost to a man firm believers in what Universalists call the dogma of eternal misery in the world to come. Nor could the fact be otherwise. Believers in eternal punishments must necessarily have a clearer sight of the evil of sin, than those who believe in limited punishments in a future state; and consequently it must follow that they will with corresponding earnestness seek themselves to shun the appearance of evil, and out of profound compassion for others, do all they can to prevent them from exposing themselves to the Divine displeasure through all eternity. And this view of this awful subject is in perfect consonance with what we observe in daily

life, and with what, in all ages and countries, has been the admitted experience of those living under the Gospel dispensation. Let me appeal in proof of this to those of my readers who, after living an ungodly life, have, through sovereign grace, been led to flee from the wrath to come, by repairing to the cross of Christ. What then was your experience? Was it from the belief in a merely temporary punishment for your sins in a future state that your minds were filled with fear and your hearts with terror? Did it then ever once occur to you that future punishments even *might* be of only limited duration? Was it not rather the conviction that punishments hereafter will be of endless duration, that filled your souls with fear and trembling, and constrained you to cry out mentally, if not with an audible voice, What must I do to be saved? There will be but one answer to the question which I have put. All will confess that it was because they felt that the misery of the wicked will be eternal in its duration that their minds were filled with an anguish, and their hearts with a consternation too great to be long borne by human nature. And while such has been the experience of all who have been converted in our day, it has been no less so in relation to the past periods of Christian history. The experience of such men

as John Bunyan, Hart, the author of the well-known evangelical hymns, John Newton, and others whose lives were as ungodly as theirs, is just the experience, in all essential points, and this one point in particular, of all those who in the present day have undergone a saving change. Whilst labouring under deep convictions of sin, and in momentary terror of being consigned to perdition, the great consideration which weighed with them was a firm belief that if they died in their sins they would perish for ever. 'It is, indeed, the conviction that the punishment of the ungodly will never have an end, that brings the evil of sin in all its enormity, as far as we can conceive what that enormity is, before the mind of the sinner. It is true that we can form no adequate conception of this enormity. Neither can those who are now, in the words of St. Peter, "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." God alone can do that; yet still we can see in sin an incomparably greater evil, when viewed in its association with a punishment hereafter which shall be of endless duration, than if the punishment were to cease at some future period, no matter how remote,—even were it to be followed by annihilation. How much more, if we believed it were followed by restoration to holiness and perfect happiness.

I need scarcely add to this, that in the very nature of things, and with minds constituted as ours are, the belief in the eternity of future punishments must prove with the sinner an immeasurably more powerful motive in seeking the pardon of his sins and the salvation of his soul, than the belief of a limited duration of punishments in the life which is to come.

On this point I am glad to be able to cite the confirmatory authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and all the more so, because his views of other points of doctrine lean, I am sorry to say, in a Rationalistic direction. In the preface to a recent volume of Sermons, which Dr. Tait published under the title of "Sermons on the Word of God and the Ground of Faith," he speaks with sufficient explicitness in relation to the danger of inculcating the doctrine that the next world will be one like the present, of probation to the lost. "I maintain," says the Archbishop, "my formerly expressed conviction, that there is nothing in the revelation of the gospel on which such a hope"—the hope of redemption in a future state—"as is here referred to can legitimately rest, and I trust that clergymen, and especially the younger clergy, will very carefully weigh the danger they may run if they give any encouragement to careless sinners who live in the midst of

Christian light, to entertain a hope unwarranted by Scripture, that their present probation which death closes may, after all, not be final. Indeed, we shall do well to be contented herein, to take God's threatenings as we do his promises, 'as they are generally set forth in Holy Scripture.' While violent and exaggerated statements on either side of this question are much to be deprecated, the encouragement of false hopes may speak peace to thoughtless souls when there is no ground for peace."

In a small work, entitled "A Letter to the Lord Bishop of London, in reference to the Controversy on the Future State of Sinners," the Rev. Mr. Maurice endeavoured to answer various portions of Dr. Tait's work, and more especially the one which I have just quoted; but the "answer" is in reality no answer at all. In the course, however, of his observations, often unintelligible from their mystical language as they are, Mr. Maurice makes one important admission in connection with the future destiny of the wicked. He confesses that there are "men who think, eighteen centuries after the publication of Christ's salvation, that possibly, in the lapse of infinite ages, some other may be found which would be better for lost souls." Mr. Maurice ascribes this belief to the inculcation of salvation

through the merits and mediation of Christ alone, in conjunction with the infliction of eternal punishment on those who rejected the Lord Jesus and his salvation, while on earth. I ascribe it to the inculcation, by Mr. Maurice himself, and others sharing his views, of the doctrine of the ultimate restoration of all mankind to perfect purity and perfect bliss, to be immediately followed by admission into heaven.

But we are not left to mere theory as to the comparative results of holding and inculcating the doctrine of eternal punishment, and entertaining and preaching the opposite doctrine of the limited duration of the misery, in another state, of those who have died in their sins. I could point to ministers of the gospel in England and in Scotland, and, I regret to say, to no inconsiderable number in London, who reject the doctrine of eternal punishments, but most studiously abstain from giving the slightest hint to their hearers that such is the fact. One of the leading and most zealous opponents and most energetic denouncers of the doctrine of eternal punishments, states, in a small work which he has lately published on the subject, that he is personally acquainted with many ministers of the gospel who share his views, and yet shrink from an admission of the fact. I can speak, from per-

sonal knowledge, to the same effect. Some, no doubt, may conceal their opinions in opposition to eternal punishments, because the avowal of them might not be palatable to the majority of their hearers; but others, with some of whom I am personally intimate, scrupulously avoid any reference to their views on this point, lest it should have disastrous effects on their ministrations. Let me put the question seriously to such ministers of the gospel,—Do you really believe that any doctrine can be in accordance with the will and word of God, which those who ostensibly fill the office of ambassadors for Christ shrink from preaching, from an apprehension that its inculcation would be attended with disastrous results to the souls of their hearers? That is a solemn question for all whose consciences tell them that such is their position. I leave the question with God and themselves, simply remarking that such persons do not, according to their own views, declare the whole counsel of God, and that against all such the Holy Scriptures abound with most terrible denunciations.

THE DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENTS.

PART SEVENTH.

I NOW come to my closing chapter on this most solemn and momentous subject. It is my intention solely to devote it to the proof of the fact, that in well-nigh all ages of the world, and under almost every form of religion—Pagan, Hindoo, Jewish, or Christian,—the doctrine of eternal punishments in a future state of existence has been most surely believed. And such being the case, I regard it as a presumptive proof of the strongest kind which could be conceived, that the doctrine is true.

First, then let me mention that all the Greek and Roman writers of any note, prior to the period in which Epicurus lived, were firm believers in the eternal punishment in another world of the utterly reprobate in this. It would take too much time to go into the proof of this statement, but to those who may have the wish and leisure to do so, I would refer to the au-

thorities on which I make it, as given in a work entitled "Universalism and Eternal Punishment," by the Rev. John Gibson Cazenove, vice-provost of the College, Isle of Cumbrae, Scotland. In passing, it is but justice to Mr. Cazenove I should mention, that his work is one of the ablest and most learned which I have met with on his side—which is my own—of the question. That Epicurus should have rejected the doctrine of never-ending torments was a logical necessity imposed upon him by other portions of his creed. He was, in fact, an Atheist, and consequently, inasmuch as he did not believe in a future state at all, he could not believe in eternal punishments. Among the more eminent Greek and Roman philosophers, poets, and general authors who implicitly believed in the infliction of never-ending punishments in the world to come, may be mentioned the names of Homer, Pindar, Æschylus, Socrates, Plato, Virgil, and Ovid.

The words of Socrates and Plato, in relation to the eternity of future punishments are worthy of being transferred to these pages. Socrates allows that there are certain offences of so slight a nature that they may be pardoned in a future state, and the parties guilty of them released from their prison. "But," he adds, "they

who shall be found incorrigible on account of the enormity of their crimes, their many foul sacrileges, or their unrighteous slaughters, or for the perpetration of similar acts,—these shall—a fitting doom for them—plunge into Tartarus, whence they shall never escape.” The language of Plato, in his “Georgias,” is not only explicit as to his belief in the eternity of punishments in a future state, but is remarkable on account of his having—without, so far as we are aware, being acquainted with Divine revelation, as contained in the Old Testament,—caught a glimpse of a great scriptural truth in connection with the ends which God means to accomplish by the eternal misery of the lost. He speaks of the lost as being kept in an eternal prison for the sake of example. “They,” says Plato, “who are held back from hope of liberation by their extreme wickedness, and, on account of such crimes, are adjudged incurables, serve as *examples* to others. They can derive no advantage from punishment, being incurable; but they can profit others by example, who behold them constantly tormented by the most severe and terrible punishments, exhibited as an example, and monument, and spectacle in Hades to all the unjust who descend thither.” I would especially commend these remarkable words of Plato to our modern

Universalists. Without the aid of that special revelation of the mind and will of God, which it is the privilege of those in the present day to possess, Plato discovered a great truth, which is wholly subversive of the Universalist hypothesis. The misery of the lost will not be corrective, but penal as regards themselves and as an example in relation to others. Alike by holy angels and glorified saints in heaven, the misery of the wicked, both as regards fallen angels and fallen men, will be felt to be an eternal proclamation of God's hatred of sin; and it can, therefore, in that way be made the means whereby all Heaven's holy and happy inhabitants may be kept in their holy and happy state.

Among the most celebrated opponents of the doctrine of eternal punishments in the earlier periods of Greece and Rome were Lucretius, Sallust, Pliny, Plutarch, Lucian, and Cicero. But their disbelief in the doctrine of eternal punishments loses much of its force when I add, that with the single exception of Cicero, who believed in future bliss, though not in future misery, all these classic authors equally denied a state of happiness in another world. They did not believe in any hereafter at all. They were practical Atheists,—men who regarded death in no other light than as an eternal sleep.

And yet in relation to Lucretius, while the admirers of his works cannot fail to regret that he himself believed in no future state of existence, he bears important testimony to the fact that in his day the belief in the eternity of a wretchedness inconceivably great in a world which was to succeed the present, was general. Referring to the prevalent fear of hell which pervaded the minds of those among whom he lived, and made those by whom it was felt unspeakably miserable,—Lucretius said, “that the fear of hell must be utterly expelled, the fear which thoroughly disturbs human life from its lowest depths, bedarkening with the blackness of death, and not suffering any pleasure to remain unalloyed.” In another place Lucretius bears his testimony to the fact, that these terrible apprehensions of future misery had their foundation in the conviction that they would be eternal in their duration. “If,” he says, “men could see that there was a definite end to their troubles, they would, in some sense, have power to resist the teaching of creeds and the threats of bards. Now,” he adds, “there is no method, no opportunity for obtaining repose, since one must fear *eternal* pains in death.” The same may be said, in effect, of other parts of Lucian’s writings, though not in terms so express.

The word "Tartarus" was that which denoted the place of eternal punishment among the classical authors of antiquity, and everywhere in their writings the word is of constant occurrence. It is the word which Jude had in his mind when, in the sixth verse of his Epistle, he speaks of the fallen angels as being "reserved in chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day." That "Tartarus" was understood by the most distinguished authors of Greece and Rome to be a place or prison from which there would be no escape, is admitted by all our greatest classical scholars. Dr. Parkhurst, author of the Hebrew and Greek Lexicons, has placed this beyond all doubt. That eminent Greek scholar quotes a passage from Lucian, in which, after representing Tartarus as being, in a physical sense, placed at the bounds or verge of the material system, he adds—

"Where iron gates and bars of solid brass
Keep it in durance infrangible,
And its return prohibit."

Dr. Parkhurst also quotes a passage from the *Iliad* of Homer, as translated by Pope, in which the word "Tartarus," or the place of the future punishment of the lost, is employed to show that the punishment of the wicked will be eternal in

its duration. The most ancient of all our poets thus expresses himself on the point :—

“That gulf, which iron gates and brazen ground
Within the earth inexorable bound ;
As deep beneath the infernal centre hurled,
As from that centre to the ethereal world.”

From the same most ancient as well as greatest of our poets, Dr. Parkhurst makes another quotation to the same effect, namely :—

“No sun e’er gilds the gloomy horrors there,
No cheerful gales refresh the lazy air,
But mocking Tartarus extends around.”

Dr. Parkhurst then summarizes all the learning he displays in relation to the nature of the torments which will be endured by the fallen angels in Tartarus, or the place of punishment appointed for them, by saying that they “will be for ever banished from the light of God’s countenance.” And if such is to be the eternal doom of fallen angels, precisely the same will be the destiny of ungodly men dying, as well as living, in their sins ; for it is expressly declared that the finally impenitent among the latter are prepared for the devil and his angels. That expression clearly shows that devils and ungodly men will have the same punishment meted out to them through all eternity.

Thus far I have limited my attention to the almost universal prevalence of a belief in the eternity of future punishments prior to the Christian era,—as that belief is to be gathered from the writings of the most eminent of the Greek and Roman authors. In a previous chapter I have shown, from ecclesiastical history, that the same belief was all but universally entertained by the Christian Fathers of the first four centuries. Of course, therefore, I now pass over them in relation to their views respecting the duration of future punishments.

It only remains for me, that I advert to the views on this subject of the leading religious bodies of the present time. I have made, in a previous chapter, a passing allusion to the fact that the Jews, as a body, concur in the doctrine of eternal punishments. Josephus will be admitted on all hands to be the highest uninspired authority in relation to the religious beliefs of God's ancient people. I need hardly say that he was one of themselves,—belonging to the straitest of the two sects, namely, the Pharisees, into which the Jews in his day were divided. In the first chapter of the eighteenth book of his "Antiquities of the Jews," speaking of future rewards and punishments, Josephus says:—"The Jews also believe that souls have an immortal vigour in them, and

that under the earth there will be rewards and punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter"—that is the ungodly—"are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but the former"—namely, the virtuous—"shall have power to revive and live again." Exceptions, as I before pointed out, are made in relation to immoral Rabbis. Their punishment in hell is not to exceed a year's duration; but the punishment of all others is to be eternal in its duration. Of course, this belief in eternal punishments is not shared by those who are only Jews by name. And of these there is a very large number. Many of God's ancient people began a century ago to renounce the faith of their forefathers, though still nominally belonging to the body, and to become rejectors of Divine revelation altogether. David Leon, one of the most learned Jews of the last century, stated, in a work which he published towards the close of the century, entitled "*Dissertations on the Prophecies of the Old Testament*," that many of his Jewish brethren had of late "become so greatly infected with scepticism by reading the writings of Bolingbroke, Hume, Voltaire, etc., that they scarcely believed in a revelation. Much less have they any hope in their future restoration." What was thus true a century ago in

relation at that time to the large secession of Jews to the ranks of Atheism and Scepticism, is, I regret to say, true to a much larger extent at the present day.

With regard to Mohammedanism, its adherents are, without exception, believers in the eternity of future punishments. It is a fundamental article of Mohammedan faith, as that faith is embodied in the Koran, that all who are sentenced to the place of punishment will be distributed in several apartments, or storeys, the one above the other, and arranged in classes, according to the relative degrees of their guilt. But the endless duration of their punishment will be equally the fate of all, with the exception of the righteous, who will be ultimately saved. "They must," are the emphatic words of the Koran, "remain there"—that is in their place of punishment—"for ever and for ever." The number of Moslems in the world is estimated at little short of 200,000,000. Their torments, we are told in the Koran, are greatly intensified by the fact that while they know they will be eternal in their duration, they cannot resist praying that they may either be mitigated or that they themselves may be annihilated.

The Greek Church, too, with, in round numbers, its 100,000,000 adherents, are equally be-

lievers in the doctrine of eternal punishments. And as all the leading doctrines of the Greek Church are held to be essential to salvation, a full faith in the doctrine of the eternal duration of future punishments is regarded as indispensable to escape hell, and to an introduction to heaven with all its glory and blessedness.

With regard to the Church of Rome, most persons in this country are more intimately acquainted with her principles than with either those of the Mohammedans or the Greek Church. The "faithful" in the Romish Church—about 200,000,000 in number—believe unreservedly in the eternal punishment of all who have committed what they call mortal sins. In relation to even the righteous, the Church of Rome finally holds that they shall have a greater or less measure of punishment inflicted upon them in a future state before they are received into glory. The place in which they are to be so punished is called purgatory. Some persons, forgetting that those who are to be consigned to purgatory are believers, not the ungodly, fall into the mistake of confounding purgatory with the place of future punishment to which the wicked will be sent, and have erroneously argued that, inasmuch as all who are appointed a place in purgatory will, sooner or later, after the process of their pur-

gation or transformation has been completed, be received into heaven,—that will be true of all who are consigned to the regions below.

With regard to the various evangelical denominations of this country, there is this one great characteristic which is common to them all,—they, as denominations, make the doctrine of eternal punishment an essential portion of their theological creed. With respect to the Church of England, the doctrine is not only taught in the Athanasian Creed, but it was originally one of her Articles. Though these are now only thirty-nine in number, they were originally, in the reign of Edward the Sixth, in whose time they were first framed, forty-two. The last of the forty-two was specifically directed against the doctrine of ultimate universal salvation. Its very heading, “All men shall not be saved at length,” was a condemnation of the Universalist creed. The article itself ran as follows:—“They also are worthy of condemnation who endeavour at this time to restore the dangerous opinion that all men, be they never so ungodly, shall at length be saved, when they have suffered for their sins a certain time appointed by God’s justice.” Some Universalists have sought to account for the omission of this article from the Thirty-nine Articles, as prepared in the time of Elizabeth,

on the ground that some of the compilers had become Universalists. The notion has not the shadow of a foundation. It was omitted simply because in the intervening period the effort to restore Universalist opinions, which in the beginning of the reign of Edward the Sixth had made some progress in the country, had completely failed, and Universalism had all but become extinct. It was the same in relation to Millenarianism. When the creed of the Church of England, in the time of Edward the Sixth, consisted of forty-two Articles, one of them—the forty-first, if I remember right—consisted of a denunciation of the Millenarians of that day, as seeking to bring in a most dangerous heresy, by maintaining that Christ was about to appear to reign personally on earth for a thousand years; but that Article is also omitted from the Thirty-nine Articles finally adopted by those who framed the Book of Common Prayer during the sovereignty of Queen Elizabeth. But it is unnecessary to furnish proofs in relation to the matter. Every one knows from their writings that each one of the three great men who compiled the Prayer-book were as firm believers in the eternity of future punishments, as any divine that could be named, of past or present times. That the doctrine of eternal punishments is the express and

emphatic teaching of the Church of England, is especially clear, were it only from one petition of the Litany, namely, that in which the people are made to pray for delivery “from everlasting damnation.” And in the Burial Service this prayer is spoken over the grave of the departed, “Deliver us not into the pains of eternal death.”

Not less firmly than the Church of England, did the Protestant Continental churches, in their better days, hold the doctrine that the misery of the lost will be lasting as eternity itself. The doctrine is expressly and emphatically taught in the Helvetic, the Dort, and the Augsburg Confessions of Faith. I need hardly say, because the fact is so well known, that the Church of Scotland has, from the days of John Knox until our own day, made that doctrine one of those features in her creed to which she has given the greatest prominence, and which she regards as a part of revealed truth which is of paramount importance. The twenty-ninth question in the “Assembly’s Catechism” is answered thus:—
 “The punishments of sins in the world to come are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body without intermission in hell fire for ever.” I ought here to remark, that though when the “Westminster Confession of Faith,”

in which this doctrine was so explicitly and emphatically taught, was drawn up, two hundred years ago, and the "Catechism" then compiled, there was only one body of Presbyterians in Scotland. There are now three Presbyterian bodies in that country, namely, the Established Church of Scotland, the Free Church, and the United Presbyterian Church. And they all hold, as essential parts of their creed—which their ministers severally sign on their ordination—the doctrine of the endless duration of punishments in the world to come.

Returning to England, I repeat what I have already said, that every evangelical denomination holds the doctrine that there will be no termination to the torments in a future state of those whose sins on earth have brought them to the abodes of perdition. Congregationalists, Baptists, Wesleyan Methodists, New Methodists, Free Church Methodists, Primitive Methodists, and the Quakers also,—all, in their collective and denominational capacity, hold the doctrine of punishments in a future state as destined to be, in their duration, co-existent with God Himself. With regard to the latter sect, I ought to mention that about a quarter of a century ago, Elisha Bates, an eminent man among the American Quakers, was authorized by the Friends in the United States

to draw up an account of their religious beliefs. This he did under the title of "The Doctrine of Friends." On the subject of the duration of future punishments, this confession of faith is as plain and as decided in its assertion of the eternity of misery in the world to come, as language could make it. It is but fair, however, that I should add, that since Elisha Bates published the work in question, he has himself abjured many of the articles in the creed of Quakerism; but I am not certain whether or not the doctrine of eternal punishment be among the number. Nor does it matter to my argument which way the fact lies, because it was not his own individual views, but those of the Society of Friends, as a sect, which he undertook to embody in his book.

With regard to the Congregationalists, it is right I should mention that they do not, as in the case of the Church of England, require the formal signing of any given religious creed by young men who are about to enter the Christian ministry in connection with their denomination,—yet they have a "Declaration of Faith," published under the auspices of the Congregational Union, to which all young ministers are expected verbally to express their adherence. The articles of Congregationalist belief, of which this "De-

claration" consists, are twenty in number, and are annually published in the "Congregational Year Book." They will be found in that of the present year, 1869. In the introduction to the twenty articles of Congregational faith, we find the following words:—"The Congregational churches in England and Wales, frequently called Independent, hold the following doctrines as of Divine authority, and as the foundation of Christian faith and practice." In another place, also preliminary to the statement of the articles of Congregational faith, we read as follows:—"They"—namely, the Congregational ministerial body, as represented by the Congregational Union—"they believe that there is no minister and no church among them that would deny the substance of any one of the following doctrines of religion, though each might prefer to state his sentiments in his own way." And "among the following doctrines of religion," for the belief in which the Congregational Union thus practically pledges itself in relation to all the Congregationalist ministers, we find one article, which is the nineteenth, or last but one, of the articles constituting the "Declaration of Faith" sanctioned by that body:—"They believe that Christ will finally come to judge the whole human race, according to their works; that the bodies of the dead will

be raised again ; and that, as the Supreme Judge, He will divide the righteous from the wicked, will receive the righteous into 'life everlasting,' but send away the wicked into 'everlasting punishment.'"

Here the Congregational Union explicitly declare, on behalf of the ministers of the Congregational denomination, their belief in the eternity of future punishments. In effect, indeed, their conviction is here as plainly expressed in the endless duration of the misery of the lost in the world to come, as is their faith in the eternity of heaven's happiness. That many of their number—I hope, a majority—do believe in the eternity of future punishments, I am fully satisfied ; but here the Congregational Union express their conviction, that there is none of the ministers of their denomination who do not believe in that doctrine. Now, I emphatically state, that there is not a man who possesses an ordinary amount of acquaintance with the Congregational body, who is not cognizant of the fact, that there are many in it who disbelieve in that doctrine. It is notorious that there are very numerous places of worship among the Congregationalists in which the doctrine has never once—not even indirectly—been preached for many years, although passages of Scripture, emphatically inculcating the

doctrine, have again and again been referred to,—the subject necessarily leading to them. In proof of this, let me ask intelligent hearers in “hundreds of places of worship” connected with the Congregational body, whether they have ever heard their ministers indicate in any way their belief in the endless duration of punishment in the world to come? I venture to say, that in great numbers of cases the answer will be in the negative. I need hardly add, that wherever the inculcation of the doctrine of eternal punishments is systematically avoided, the minister does not believe the doctrine; for to suppose he did, and yet never taught it, or in any way expressed his belief in it, would be to incur the awful condemnation which rests on those who shun or fail to declare what they believe to be the whole counsel of God.

Thus I have shown that, in all ages and countries wherever religion in any form has existed, a conviction of the truth of the eternity of future punishments has been all but universal. Paganism, Hindooism, Mahomedanism, the Greek Church, the Romish Church, and all the diversified sects holding evangelical views in Christendom, have, in their denominational capacity, believed, and do at this day believe, in the eternal misery of those who die unpardoned and unsaved.

Surely this is a great fact, viewed in its relation to the truth or otherwise of the tremendously important doctrine in question. I do not say that the fact is absolutely, in itself, decisive of the point at issue, but I could conceive of no mere presumptive evidence of a stronger kind. If a belief in eternal punishments be groundless, it surely is strange that all classes of religionists, whether their creed be based on the teachings of reason or of revelation, should have, by unanimous consent, come to the conclusion that the wicked, in another world, will be doomed to a punishment which shall be eternal in its duration.

I have thus dwelt at very considerable length on the evidence, in some cases presumptive, but for the most part positive, which can be adduced in various forms in favour of the doctrine of eternal punishments. I have sought to pen every sentence I have written with that profound solemnity of mind which becomes the momentous nature of the question. I might have added to the arguments which I have brought forward, but hope I have adduced sufficient. The inconceivable importance of the subject will justify the space which I have devoted to it. The issues involved in the question are, as I said in the outset, overwhelmingly awful. The conviction, if groundless, that future punishments will be only of

limited, not of eternal duration, is an error so absolutely frightful that the human mind shrinks from its contemplation. On the other hand, should perchance, after all, the opposite belief, namely, that punishments in a future state will be of endless duration, be a mistaken belief, and that a period will be put, sooner or later, to the miseries of those who died unsaved,—the mistaken notion will involve no disastrous results. Not the slightest harm will come to any one because it was reserved for the light of eternity to dispel, on this point, the darkness which enveloped his mind in time. This is a consideration which ought to, and I trust will, have at least this effect,—that every one who in a doubtful frame of mind, applies himself to an investigation of the terribly momentous question, will resolve that before he comes to the negative conclusion, that is, that future punishments will not be eternal in their duration,—he will demand a larger amount of evidence in support of that belief than he would do in favour of the doctrine of the endless duration of future punishments.

But I dare not, in concluding what I have said on this solemn subject, speak as if there were room for the slightest doubt as to the eternity of the awful doom which awaits all the ungodly in the day of judgment. I hold the evi-

dence to be overwhelmingly conclusive, as to the fact, that as certainly as the righteous shall then go away into life eternal, so surely shall the wicked go away into everlasting punishment. Let me, as my parting words to my readers, entreat them to weigh well and prayerfully all that I have said on behalf of this awful doctrine. Let me impress deeply and abidingly on their minds this great fact,—that no one of those many learned and gifted men who have written in favour of the limited duration of future punishments, have been able to point to one *single* passage of Scripture, which can, by any amount of ingenuity, however great, be made to give even a seeming *positive* sanction to the doctrine that there will be an end to the misery in a future state, of those who have perished in their sins in the present world. The Rev. Moses Stuart, Professor of Theology in Andover College, America, a man whose unsound views on other points, would have naturally predisposed him to accept, if he could have done so, the theory of the ultimate salvation of all mankind,—was compelled to confess that after the most careful examination of the Scriptures, he could not find even one verse which warrants a belief in the recovery from hell of a single sinner who shall be consigned to that place. The portion of the lost,

in words of Divine inspiration which have been already quoted, will be—“*The blackness of darkness for ever.*” Let us hope that none of us shall know experimentally what an infinitude of awful meaning there is in these few words, or in those other words,—“The wine of the wrath of God,” and “The wrath of the Lamb,” as being destined to be poured out without measure and without mixture, on the wicked in that future state of existence to which we are all on our way. And that this outpouring of the wine of the wrath of God and of the Lamb will never cease, is placed beyond all question, because it is added, in the very next verse of the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation, in which the expression occurs, that “the smoke of their torment”—the torment caused by these outpourings of the Divine wrath “ascendeth up for *ever and ever.*”

THE EXISTING RELIGIOUS CRISIS : OUR DANGERS AND OUR DUTIES.

PART FIRST.

HITHERTO I have confined my observations to those deplorable departures from the truth as it is in Jesus, which are to be found in the various forms which the opposition to the doctrine of Eternal Punishments has taken at different times, and to a far greater extent of late than at any previous period in the records of Christianity. It remains that I should now call attention to some other kinds of dangerous and also of deadly error which are prevalent at the present time, and which are still rapidly spreading. My remaining space will not admit of a full discussion of these diversified forms of error, nor will it be possible for me even briefly to advert to them all. I must content myself with the simple enumeration of many of the leading departures from the truth of the Gospel, which are prevalent at the present hour, and with making little than a passing allusion to others.

First of all, then, let me mention as one of the lamentable errors of the day, the denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures. It is appalling to those who really believe the Bible to be, in the strictest sense of the term, the Word of God, to find that the rejection of the special inspiration of the Scriptures has made, within the last few years, more progress among ministers of the Gospel, alike in the Church of England and among those Dissenting denominations which are conventionally called Evangelical, than it did among the same bodies during an entire previous century. This is a point on which the majority of my readers are as competent as myself to form an opinion, because I know that a majority of them regularly attend places of public worship. If the inspiration of the Bible were honestly and implicitly believed in, our clergymen and Dissenting ministers would preach it with the same frequency and fulness as we find it inculcated in the Old and New Testaments. Is this so? Is it not notoriously otherwise? To the former question, the answer must be in the negative,—to the latter, in the affirmative. The prevalent opinion with regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures, is demonstratively the same in substance as that of Dr. Colenso, though his particular phraseology may be taken exception to

—that the Word of God is in the Bible, but that the Bible is *not* the Word of God. That the Scriptures contain a large amount of truth which has been revealed to mankind for the first time in that book is generally admitted, but it is maintained that there is more or less of error mixed up with it. The lamentable extent to which this rejection of the true inspiration of the Scriptures prevails, has been strikingly illustrated, as mentioned in my Preface, by circumstances which occurred in the spring of the present year. The Rev. Dr. Raleigh, one of the most distinguished Congregational divines of the day, had to deliver, in his capacity as President of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, an Inaugural Address to that body. A large portion of his address evidently had a tendency to exalt Science above the Scriptures. Such may not have been Dr. Raleigh's intention, but it had assuredly that effect. In parts, indeed, the President of the Congregational Union distinctly asserted, and seemed pleased in making the assertion, that there are *mistakes* and *errors* in the Bible. Had Dr. Raleigh contented himself with saying that through errors in the translation of the Scriptures, or in their transcription, the meaning of particular passages is obscured, or even made to differ from the import of those passages as they

were originally written, the matter would have been different. But if specific words are capable of expressing definite ideas, Dr. Raleigh is chargeable with entertaining the conviction that the Bible, as it came direct from the pens of the writers, contained mistakes and errors. A more plain denial of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures could not be made. It involves this alternative,—either God himself is the author of “mistakes” in that book which is called his Word, or portions of the Bible were not divinely inspired at all, but were simply emanations from the minds of those who penned those passages of which this can be predicated. But in order that no injustice may be done to Dr. Raleigh, it is right to quote at least a portion of his own words :—“It is,” he says, “just as *certain* that there are *mistakes* and *errors* in the Bible, considered as a human book, as it is certain that fallible men wrote the several parts of it, distinguished and selected them one by one from other contemporary writings, copied them from manuscripts, translated them from one language to another.”

When the Inaugural Address of the chairman of the Congregational Union was first published, the *English Independent* replied to the above extract, and other objectionable por-

tions of Dr. Raleigh's address, with great ability and effect. No one could have more rejoiced in that answer of the *English Independent* than I did; but my joy, and that of others who in this matter were like-minded with myself, was but of short duration; for in the very next number of that journal, or in the next but one—I am not now sure which—there came a virtual retraction of all that was important in what it had previously said, with a formal announcement that it now concurred in Dr. Raleigh's views in relation to “mistakes and errors” in the Scriptures. The *English Independent*, indeed, virtually confesses, as I understand it, that it goes beyond Dr. Raleigh in what others and myself regard as Dr. Raleigh's heterodox views on the inspiration of the Scriptures. I admire the frankness of the confession; but the question occurs,—By what means was this sudden change brought about? Another question also presents itself for solution,—How much further does the *English Independent* go than Dr. Raleigh in the direction of his heterodox sentiments respecting the inspiration of Scriptures? These are very important questions, because the *Independent*, being the recognized organ of the Congregational body, and no one of that body having taken exception to its avowal of

going further than Dr Raleigh in his belief in "mistakes and errors" in the Scriptures,—we are justified in inferring that the Congregationalist denomination share the *Independent's* more "liberal" views on the inspiration of the Bible than those of Dr. Raleigh.

It is due to Dr. Raleigh to say, that some weeks after the publication of his Address, he wrote a letter to the journal I have just named, in which he somewhat modifies certain portions of that document. But I cannot see that he has materially improved his position. His views on inspiration seem to me to be substantially what they were before this letter appeared. He says, in the second edition of his Address, that there is yet in the Bible "an infallible, or, at any rate, a certain and sufficient, communication to the world of the mind and will of God." But, unhappily, even the value of this admission, which I maintain is not sufficiently clear or precise in the language employed, is neutralized by what precedes it. "*Despite,*" Dr. Raleigh says, "the errors and mistakes which are natural, and without continual miracle, inevitable, there is yet," etc. In this passage he reasserts that there are "errors and mistakes in the Bible."

I should like Dr. Raleigh to answer this question,—Did he, when in Rotherham, or in

Glasgow, or at any time during his pastorate in his present chapel, before express the same views of inspiration as he did in his Inaugural Address as chairman of the Congregational Union? I happen to be personally acquainted with parties who were his regular hearers in the two former places, as well as with others who have attended his present ministry in Hare Court Chapel, Highbury, and I am perfectly certain of this, that they never heard him express his belief in "mistakes and errors" in the Bible, in the same, or in a similar way to that which he has done in the Address in question. Some persons say that Dr. Raleigh's views have undergone a change for the worse on the subject of inspiration since his recent fraternization with two well-known deans,—Dean Stanley and Dean Alford. I express no opinion on this point; but this I will say, because I have the authority of Scripture for the sentiment, that evil communications corrupt good manners; and this I know, that both Dean Stanley and Dean Alford, though grievously wrong on various other points, are especially wrong on the question of the inspiration of the Bible.

The plan of my book will not permit me to enter into any lengthened vindication of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and their consequent

authority as the Word of God. But there is a fallacy which lurks in the brief passage I have quoted from Dr. Raleigh's Inaugural Address which it is important to expose. He calls the Bible a "human book," written, in its various parts, by "fallible men." The phrase "human book" is one which every one who regards the Bible as a special revelation of the mind and will of God to the world, must emphatically repudiate. It is a *Divine* book : it is called the *sacred* Scriptures—the Book of God—the Word of the Lord. I must, too, energetically deny the justice of Dr. Raleigh's assumption, that the writers of the Old and New Testaments were "fallible men," regarded in their capacity as the penmen of the Scriptures. They were fallible in relation to the ordinary actions and circumstances of life ; but they were infallible, absolutely infallible, when writing the several books which proceeded from their respective pens. They were then under the special enlightenment and direction of God's Holy Spirit. If they were not "infallible"—not in themselves but made so under the special guidance of the "infallible" Spirit—not only *may* they have committed mistakes, but, in the nature of things, they *must* have fallen into grievous errors. The result would be, that no one could be able to say what in the Bible is Divine truth and what is error.

And this is the inevitable consequence which ensues from Dr. Raleigh's belief in the "mistakes and errors," which he asserts to be in the Scriptures. With his views of the inspiration of the Bible, will he tell us how we are to distinguish between what is and what is not the truth? His hypothesis leaves us all in utter uncertainty on that most vital point. Even Dr. Raleigh himself could give no definite, no satisfactory answer, were some modern Pilate to put the question to him,—“What is truth?” He may be safely challenged to point to any particular passage of Scripture, and say whether it is or is not a “mistake” or “error.” I fear that Dr. Raleigh has not yet realized the gravity of the position into which he has brought himself by his persistent adherence to his proposition—made, so far as my information goes, for the first time—that the Bible contains “mistakes and errors.”

I remember Miss Marsh, author of the “Life of Hedley Vicars,” on one occasion, furnishing an illustration of the infinite importance of a single word in many passages of Scripture. She instanced the case of a dying woman who would receive no comfort from various portions of Scripture which were suited to her case, until at last Miss Marsh quoted the well-known text,

“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from *all* sin.” It was the little word “*all*” in the text, that brought peace and joy to the dying woman’s soul. Had the text been simply that the blood of Christ cleanseth us from sin, it would have ministered no consolation to her. She would, in that case, as she stated, have felt that the blood of Christ would avail for the expiation of sins, and the sanctification of the souls of others, but it might not for hers. But she felt that inasmuch as Christ’s blood cleanseth from *all* sin, it must of necessity be effectual in cleansing her from all *her* sins.

It is possible that in answer to this, Dr. Raleigh may urge that other portions of Scripture teach the same doctrine, though in another form of words, and that in that fact we have a conclusive proof that the doctrine is true. This would be no answer to my position. As Dr. Raleigh confessedly does not know, now that he has given up, in effect, the inspiration of the Scriptures, what is true in the Bible and what is not, he can offer us no guarantee that all the passages in which the doctrine is in substance taught in the Bible, that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, is not one of the errors contained in that Book. How can he tell whether John may not have quoted it, though

in different language, from some other portion of Scripture, where it was originally “a mistake or error,” and that all the intervening writers of the Scriptures may have copied the erroneous doctrine each from those who went before him. Dr. Raleigh, in fact, with the abandonment of his belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures, deprives us of all security for the truth of any one doctrine which is taught in the Bible. That is the inevitable result of his new theological theory.

If we are to acquiesce in Dr. Raleigh’s views of inspiration—if we are constrained to concur with him that there are “mistakes and errors” in the Scriptures, and we have no means of knowing what are “mistakes and errors,” and what are facts and truths—who can tell but that *not* only the phrase, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, may be a “mistake”; but that all others of the most important and precious doctrinal portions of Scripture may be equally “mistakes and errors”?

But if other proofs were needed that the writers of the Old and New Testaments were not “fallible men,” while inditing what they wrote, I would remind Dr. Raleigh that the phrases, “Thus saith the Lord,” the “Lord said unto Moses,” and “The Lord spake unto me, and

said," "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying," and others to the same effect, occur in numerous cases in the Old Testament.

As it may be the means of bringing back to a belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures, some whose faith on that point may have been shaken by the errors which prevail in relation to it, let me earnestly solicit attention for a few moments to another class of proofs which are furnished of the entire truthfulness of the Scriptures by some of the writers of both Testaments. The Psalmist, speaking of the books of the Old Testament which were written before his time, calls them the "words of the Lord," and therefore they must have been penned under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. David adds, in the same sixth verse of the twelfth Psalm, that they are "pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." This is a striking mode of expressing David's conviction of the perfect inspiration of the books of the Bible which were in existence in his day. Another proof of their inspiration and consequent truthfulness is given in the ninety-third Psalm, where the man according to God's own heart, says, "Thy testimonies are very sure." They are God's testimonies, revealed to the men who wrote them by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, otherwise they

could not be "very sure." Speaking to the Prophet Jeremiah, God himself says:—"Read in the roll, which thou hast *written from my mouth*, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people in the Lord's house upon the fasting day." Daniel calls the books which were written before his time, "The Scriptures of truth." Zechariah says, "Hear the words which the Lord hath cried by the former prophets."

These are only a few out of very many portions which I might have quoted from the Old Testament, in which the special inspiration of the Scriptures is declared in terms so expressive as to preclude the possibility of their being misunderstood.

Coming down to the New Testament, written nearly five hundred years after the Old Testament was completed, we find numerous explicit and emphatic recognitions of the entire truthfulness of that book in its complete state, and of the fact of the inspiration by the Holy Ghost of all it contains being the source of its freedom from error. There is one single verse in the first chapter of the Second Epistle of Peter, which of itself completely demolishes Dr. Raleigh's theory, that there is the human, and consequently the fallible, element in the Scriptures. "These prophecies," says the Apostle of

the Circumcision, "came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." What language could more clearly attest the fact, that while in the act of penning the Old Testament Scriptures, the writers were, from first to last, entirely and exclusively under the guidance of God's unerring Spirit? Paul, in a number of cases in his epistles, affirms, in the most expressive language which he could employ, the same truth as Peter taught in the passage I have quoted. In one place Paul emphatically declares that all Scripture is divinely inspired of God. In another, that he spoke "in words which the Holy Spirit taught" him. Again, he says, that the things which he wrote "were the commandments of the Lord;" and not to mention other places, he declares that the gospel "which he preached was not after man, neither was he taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

If more proof be required of the important fact that the writers of the various books of the Bible were not, when acting in that capacity, "fallible men," as Dr. Raleigh asserts they were, but were, while so employed, led into all truth, so far as related to what they wrote,—that further proof would be found in the great fact that our Lord himself, uniformly in his public ministrations,

recognized the authority, and consequently the unerring character of the statements and teachings of the Old Testament Scriptures.

In the parable in which we have recorded the doom of Dives, our Lord's answer through Abraham to the rich man's prayer, that Abraham would send some one from heaven to his father's house to warn his five brethren of the danger to which they were exposed of meeting with such a doom as his own,—was, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Could any form of language more strikingly affirm the truthfulness and consequent inspiration of the Old Testament, than that I have quoted from this parable of our Lord? "Search the Scriptures," says Jesus, in another place, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me." Would our Lord have given this command if there had been "mistakes and errors" in the Scriptures?

To suppose, indeed, as Dr. Raleigh does, that there were "mistakes and errors" in the Jewish Scriptures is, in effect, to represent Christ as giving his special sanction to that which was not the truth of God, but, in part, at least, the teachings of "fallible men." Will any

one, then, after duly weighing this important fact, acquiesce in the statement of Dr. Raleigh, that “fallible men,” as such, penned the Scriptures? To do so would be in effect to prefer the statements of Dr. Raleigh on the subject, to the repeated and emphatic utterances of our Lord as to the unerring character of the Old Testament Scriptures. We have, then, our Lord himself, the Old Testament writers, and the Apostles, all emphatically and repeatedly declaring that the Bible constitutes the Word of God, and that it was written under the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and consequently, must be free from error. We have Dr. Raleigh saying, in effect, that it is not all true, but that it contains “mistakes and errors.” Which are we to believe—we put the question with the most profound reverence—our Lord, Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, or Dr. Raleigh? I need not answer the question. The reader will at once answer it for himself.

I will not waste a single word in reference to the question as to whether the Scriptures were, or were not, *verbally* inspired. That does not necessarily, nor at all, affect the question of the Bible’s actual inspiration. I think that much useless controversy has taken place on that phase of the subject. Ever since I was able to form an

opinion on the question, it always has been enough for me to feel assured that God, by his Holy Spirit, so effectually guided, so entirely controlled the writers of both Testaments, when they were transferring to paper his messages to mankind, through them, as that they should, instead of, as Dr. Raleigh says, commit "mistakes," and fall into "errors," never give expression to a single sentence which was not dictated to them by the Holy Ghost, so far as related to its meaning. In this way God precluded the possibility of their making any "mistakes," or falling into any "errors." It was only lately that I met with a felicitous mode of Bishop Ridley's expressing what had always been my views on the subject of inspiration. Writing to John Bradford on the subject of election and predestination, Bishop Ridley speaks of the various writers of the Old and New Testaments as secretaries whom God instructed by his Holy Spirit what they should write, they,—under the Spirit's direction, while employing the language most natural to them—being prevented from the use of a single word which would lead to error, but guided to the use of such words as would conduct the reader into all truth. "Concerning," said Bishop Ridley—I quote from the life of John Bradford—"Concerning the matter you mean, I have drawn out

the places of the Scriptures, and upon them have noted what I could for the time in these matters. I am so fearful that I dare not speak further. Yea, almost none other than the *very text* doeth, as it were, lead me by the hand." We have the distinct authority of the Apostle Paul for maintaining the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures in the substantial sense of the phrase. In the thirteenth verse of the second chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle of the Gentiles says:—"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which"—namely, the *very words*—"the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Surely this is a sufficient authority for our believing in, and contending for, the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, so far as their unerring teaching is concerned.

But it is not in the passage only which I have quoted from Dr. Raleigh's Address as President of the Congregational Union, that he practically denies the inspiration of the Scriptures. He repudiates the dogmatic teaching of the apostolical writings, especially those of Paul. "Provided," he says, you "receive the historical facts relating to our Lord Jesus Christ, you have a right to draw out of them what general conclusions or doctrines seem to yourself right and

true." If this doctrine of Dr. Raleigh be sound doctrine, then the teaching of the Apostles in their Epistles possesses no claims to be considered as being clothed with any Divine authority whatever. If we are at liberty to draw our own conclusions, and to form our own opinions, from the historical facts relating to the Lord Jesus Christ, altogether irrespective of what Paul and the other Apostles have taught us in the way of doctrine, then the inspiration of the Epistles is utterly and for ever gone. Our conclusions, or the doctrines which we may ground on them, may be entirely at variance with the conclusions or doctrines which we find recorded in the Epistles. And yet Paul, and Peter, and John may be wrong, and we be right in our deductions, from the "historical facts relating to our Lord Jesus Christ." No form of words could more effectually lay the axe at the root of the inspiration of the Apostolic writings than the extract which I have just made from Dr. Raleigh's Inaugural Address. If Dr. Raleigh will be consistent with himself, he ought never to preach from, nor quote, as having any authority, however slight, any text in the Epistles, unless the doctrine taught by that particular text should accord with his own individual "conclusions or doctrines" deduced from the "historical facts relating to our Lord Jesus Christ." I regard

this as one of the most dangerous forms in which the denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures has ever been presented to mankind. I should like to know with this new creed of Dr. Raleigh's, in what light he regards the solemn language of the Apostle Paul when, enforcing the Divine authority with which his messages were clothed, he said:—"If an angel from heaven preach *any other* doctrine than that we have preached, let him be accursed." Paul and Dr. Raleigh, therefore, are clearly in direct antagonism to each other on this momentous question.

But my main object in calling special attention to the late utterances of Dr. Raleigh respecting his views on the inspiration of the Scriptures, is to advert to the fact, as proving what I have said in the beginning of this chapter, that the large number of Congregational ministers from the provinces, as well as the majority of those in the metropolis who were present, vehemently applauded Dr. Raleigh's address from beginning to end, and consequently those parts in which he gave utterance to the opinions to which I have adverted in relation to "mistakes and errors" in the Bible. Not one in the large assembly arose to express his dissent from Dr. Raleigh's sentiments. It is a further lamentable proof of the prevalence of Dr. Raleigh's views among Congregational

ministers in the United Kingdom—amounting to some thousands—that, with three exceptions I am not aware of anyone that has condemned those views in writing. The three who exposed and denounced Dr. Raleigh's opinions on inspiration were the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Alexander, of Edinburgh; the Rev. Mr. Fraser, theological tutor in Airdale College; and the Rev. Edward White. The communications of these three ministers appeared in the *English Independent*, Mr. White's being the most elaborate of the three, and certainly one of great ability. The Rev. Dr. Alexander and Mr. Fraser also ably vindicated the inspiration of the Scriptures in the most comprehensive sense of the phrase.

But in the same journal in which these three letters were published, there appeared another of a quite different stamp, furnishing me with further proof, not only of the fearful prevalence of the denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures in the ordinary sense of the word, but proving the appalling extent to which other deadly errors exist in the Nonconformist body. The writer of the letter alluded to is the Rev. G. W. Conder, of Manchester, a minister of no inconsiderable position in the Congregationalist denomination. In one part of his communication, Mr. Conder expresses himself thus:—"I should like to be

allowed to say, and I am sure what I say will be *endorsed by hundreds of our body*, that Dr. Raleigh is to be greatly admired and deeply thanked for the boldness with which he has affirmed an indubitable fact about us Congregationalists—that we have now got almost entirely emancipated from the *tyranny of the theological systems and schools*. This piece of advice I remember to have had some twenty-five years ago from one who is now, alas! one of our ‘old men,’ and has all his life been one of our foremost: ‘Stick to your classics and mathematics, Sir; *you’ll have to make your theology for yourself by and by.*’ The ‘isms’ are clean gone from their throne amongst us.”

No one, I should think, can misconceive the meaning of this passage. It obviously is an expression of the writer’s exultation that the time has at last come when Congregational ministers, as a body, have to a great extent got rid of all creeds, or any definite theological views, and his conviction that Dr. Raleigh, by his late Inaugural Address, as chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, will materially assist in completing the work which has thus, in Mr. Conder’s opinion, so auspiciously begun. Mr. Conder further affirms, that ere long our Congregational ministers will complete the work of pull-

ing down all existing systems of theology, and then they will commence the erection, each one for himself, of some new theological edifice. That each Congregational minister is to make a theology for himself, is as plain as language could make it, from Mr. Conder's statement. If Mr. Conder's anticipations are destined to be realized, we shall certainly see an exhibition of harmony in the Congregational body such as the world never before witnessed. The laity will, as a matter of course, follow the example set them by their ministers in the work of constructing theological systems for themselves, and the result will be that we shall have as many systems of faith as there will be Congregational Christians in the world.

We often meet with such titles to works as "Every Man his own Lawyer," "Every Man his own Doctor," "Every Man his own Gardener," etc., and ere long we may expect to find that no two persons are agreed in the Congregational body. And while every minister is to be his "Own Theologian" in a new and greatly enlarged sense, we may expect that every layman will call himself his own minister. The confusion of words at Babel is destined to be surpassed by a confusion of "theological systems," as the result of the "isms,"—which,

after all, have done good service in their day,—being “clean gone from their throne.” Poor “isms!” Theirs is a hard prospective fate. They are legitimate subjects for pity.

Mr. Conder, as I understand him, is a great advocate of perpetual development in the religion of Christ. The present generation, therefore, are not half so well up in theology as the next generation will be, while the generation succeeding it will to a proportionate extent surpass the theological attainments of the intervening generation. In this way the knowledge of theology will go on increasing, so long as the world lasts. What a wondrous world for its profound divinity we shall have in the end! Most religious people believe in a coming Millennium of some kind or other,—either a spiritual Millennium, or a Millennium inaugurated by the personal reign of Christ, and continued for a thousand years. It is plain that Mr. Conder is no Millenarian at all,—not in either of the two senses I have named. It is an essential point of the creed of either class of Millenarians, that during its continuance the theological knowledge of God's people will be perfect, and that there will consequently be a complete accord as to its nature. It will not be so according to Mr. Conder's hypothesis. Not only will every one have a creed of his own, but each

individual's creed will go on receiving additional development all through the Millennial period of the Church's history, and until the gospel dispensation has come to a close by the advent of Christ to the general judgment.

But to show what Mr. Conder, speaking as the representative of "hundreds of us," namely, of Congregational ministers, thinks of the new theology in general, and of the rapid progress it is making in the Congregational body, let us listen to another of his utterances. Mr. Conder says:—"Of this let Dr. Raleigh assure himself, that whilst, naturally enough, and rightly enough, some of those who have had to fight the battles of former times round a different standard than that which rallies us to-day—and who fought it bravely and to the common benefit—are alarmed at his unfurling of *a new banner with a strange and queer device*, there are *hundreds* of us who are thankful to find that we have a chairman for 1868 who has the courage to avow what is *most widely believed and preached*, and who will give us, not smooth-sounding platitudes which disgrace speakers and hearers alike, but a real, manly handling of a topic of the times, and an utterance which will find an echo, not only at every point within our own circumference, but outside of us, wherever earnest thought on theologi-

cal topics has burst the bonds of the dead schools.” I wonder how Dr. Raleigh will relish this.

But though the professed friends of the Bible are thus doing all they can—and doing it more effectively than its open enemies—to destroy its authority, by denying its divine inspiration, their efforts will ultimately fail; their labours will, in the end, be in vain. That blessed Book, the charter of man’s salvation, the guarantee of the believer’s escape from perdition, and of his attainment, when time to him shall be no more, of perfect holiness and happiness in heaven,—will survive the efforts of the unholy alliance between infidels and nominal Christians, which has been formed with a view to the destruction of the Scriptures, as an ample and unerring revelation of the mind and will of God to man. It triumphed, as did Christianity itself, which has its sure foundations in the Bible, over the confederacy entered into more than a century ago by Frederick the Great of Prussia, Voltaire, and the French Encyclopædists, who loaded it with mingled ridicule and scorn. It no less signally triumphed over the assaults of the Atheism which characterized the French revolution towards the close of the last century. And it will come off victorious from the conflict which it has now to carry on with real foes under the guise of professed

friends. Let not, therefore, any real believer in the Bible be cast down by reason of the attacks which it has now to resist and repel. Let it be enough for us to know that greater is He that is for his own written Word, than all they that are against it. We have God's own promise that the Bible will not be vanquished in the battle which is now being fought. Surely it ought to be enough for us to know, that God Himself has said, by the pen of his own inspired servant, "The Word of the Lord abideth *for ever.*"

Still, no true Christian can fail deeply to deplore the extent to which the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures are assailed at the present time. Once Dr. Raleigh's doctrine, that there are "mistakes and errors" in the Bible—which is but another form of expressing his belief that the Bible is not inspired,—begins to be received as sound teaching, we may, and must, prepare for a perfect inundation of error on all other religious questions. The man who has got loose from the anchor of implicit faith in the inspiration and authority of Scripture, has launched himself on an ocean of error, without rudder or compass, and knows not whither he may drift. He cannot tell on what destructive rocks or quicksands he may make

shipwreck of all that is vital in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Many lamentable instances of the great peril, as well as sin, of repudiating the inspiration of the Scriptures are constantly occurring. Not two years have elapsed since one minister of the gospel in Scotland, for many years a professedly evangelical preacher, suddenly started aside, like a broken bow, from his belief in the Bible as the Word of God ; and where is he now ? I fear that he has now gone so far away from Christian principles, that he could not tell what his religious views are, nor indeed whether he has any religious views at all. At the north-east end of London we have another minister, professedly still a preacher of the gospel, who, not many years ago, was the pastor of one of the largest, most prosperous, and most evangelical congregations in the west end of London. I should like to know what his theological opinions now are,—if indeed he has any definite opinions on religious questions at all. In the north of London we have had a recent case of a similar kind ; but after a time, losing all heart in preaching his merely moral platitudes, which could not convert a single soul if inculcated till the sound of the last trumpet is heard, this preacher has for some time withdrawn from even his nominal ministry.

I ascribe as the first and principal cause of the deadly errors which have of late become so rife in our churches and chapels, the repudiation of the inspiration of the Scriptures. To the same cause I mainly attribute all the painful dishonesty and hypocrisy which are at this time so prevalent in the Church of England and amongst the Nonconformist denominations. I maintain that as regards hundreds of our churches and chapels, the ministers who officiate in them, in going through the forms which their respective denominational rules and regulations require, do not believe in what they are called on to say or to do. Dean Stanley is an illustration and confirmation of my statement. “He boldly proclaims that not one clergyman believes in the Athanasian Creed.” And yet he and all of them read it on the Sunday with the utmost solemnity, and with as much seeming sincerity as if they firmly believed every word of it. And all of them, we know, signed that Creed. I cannot, at the moment, lay my hands on the particular work of Dean Stanley in which this statement appears, but I refer to an article in a recent number of the *Christian World*, in which it will be found. A man in the ordinary intercourse of life who would be guilty of such flagrant dishonesty, such rank hypocrisy, would be banished from society; yet Dean Stanley and

the clergy of the Church of England of whom his statement is true, hold their heads as high as if they were the most upright men in the world,—as if they were sincere believers in every word of that Creed. And so with regard to Nonconformist ministers, I express my deliberate conviction, formed after ample opportunities of coming to a right conclusion, that the majority of their number do not now entertain, and, of course, do not preach, important doctrines in which they professed to have a full faith at the time of their ordination, and to which they solemnly engaged to give due prominence in their pulpit ministrations.

THE EXISTING RELIGIOUS CRISIS: OUR DANGERS AND OUR DUTIES.

PART SECOND.

THERE is another exhibition of what, to say the least of it, looks like insincerity, to which I have alluded in my Preface, as having been recently presented to us in a practical shape. Within the present year we have seen a strange sort of fraternization between certain leading and avowed Rationalists in the Anglican Church, and several of the most popular of our metropolitan Nonconformist preachers. The Scriptures ask the question, "How can two walk together unless they are agreed?" Dean Stanley and two other dignitaries of the Church of England, with five or six of the most eminent Congregationalist ministers in London, lately put the question to the test of experiment. In appearance they seemed, for a season, to fraternize wonderfully well, but, if I am correctly informed, the new brotherhood has been virtually broken up, and

the two divisions have each gone its own way. But while it lasted, there must have been a serious surrender of principle on both sides. The Nonconformist portion of the unnatural brotherhood were all professed Evangelicals. Dean Stanley and those other Anglican clergymen who regard him as their theological “guide, philosopher, and friend,” are among the most advanced of our modern Rationalists. The Nonconformists are strenuous Voluntaries, and to a man are in favour of the abolition, not only of the Irish Church establishment, but of *all* religious establishments. Dean Stanley before two revolving moons had made their circuit, not only voted for, but moved a resolution at the great Church Meeting in St. James’s Hall, in favour of the maintenance of the Irish Church as an Established Church; and close on the heels of that exhibition of his ecclesiastical principles, he publicly declared himself to be in favour of endowing Popery in Ireland. Parenthetically let me say, that I believe Dean Stanley would have no objection to the endowment of Hindooism, or Mohammedanism, in our Indian dominions. I may be wrong, but such is my conviction. Surely this course of conduct must have brought the Congregational ministers who played this new role, to their senses; but if it did not,

it certainly ought to have opened their eyes to the colossal mistake they had committed in entering into so unholy an alliance with these Anglican dignitaries.

Then there was the melancholy exhibition at Cheshunt College. The compromise of principle was there pretty well proportioned on either side. Dean Alford performed the part of president of the day at the gathering, and made a speech, for which, and for his appearance in the character of a fraterniser with Dissenters, he has been severely censured by most of the Church journals. One of our most popular Congregationalist preachers, arrayed in a surplice in the Episcopal, almost Ritualistic style, read the Church service, only omitting two or three brief passages, which no Dissenter could consistently sanction. I believe that the affair may be regarded as the principal cause of leading to the break up, which I am assured has taken place, of this unnatural union. The better class of Nonconformists—those who are faithful to the principles they profess, did not at the time fail to express their feelings of deep sorrow, mingled with feelings of a different kind, at the distressing sight witnessed at Cheshunt College on the occasion to which I allude. And no wonder, for it furnished a lamentable proof of the degeneracy of some of

our leading Congregationalists, compared with the manly, and sturdy, and consistent Nonconformists, not only of the days of Milton and Cromwell, but even of the early part of the present century.

As was to be expected, the Rationalist party in the Church were jubilant at what they called the "concessions" which the eminent Congregationalists, who were the principal performers on the occasion, made to the Episcopal Establishment. In the correspondence on the subject, which took place in the Rationalistic organ, the *Guardian*, immediately after the occurrence, we were furnished with ample proof of this, just as we were of the fact that the subordinate dignitaries in the Church regarded it as an act of condescension on their part to fraternise at all, even for a brief season, with Congregational ministers. The last of the letters which I have seen in the *Guardian* in reference to the Cheshunt affair, was written by the Rev. Dr. Monsell, vicar of Egham. He advocates not only a patronizing conduct on the part of the Church towards Dissenters, but inculcates the exercise of *pity* to them ! He agrees with his "good friend, the Archdeacon of Coventry"—who, by the way, was present on the occasion as a sort of lieutenant to Dean Alford, that the Rationalistic party in the Church should

“meet, confer, and associate with them in all faithfulness, but in all charity.” I could imagine nothing more mortifying to those Congregationalist metropolitan ministers, who were the principal performers on this occasion, than the language thus employed by the Archdeacon of Coventry, and indorsed and adopted by Dr. Monsell, vicar of Egham. But Dr. Monsell has something to say on the subject in language of his own. Speaking of the concessions which the Nonconformists, present at Cheshunt made to the Episcopal Church, the Vicar of Egham thus expresses himself:—“They accepted all our Liturgy save only two clauses; and by their ‘elimination’ of the words of authority from the Absolution, *they admitted that holy orders alone give a power to absolve*; while, by their use of our *priestly garments*, they made a visible step toward conformity, and have so far helped to remove from the minds of some of their dissenting brethren in our Church scruples *about the use of the surplice*, which higher and better authority perhaps could not remove.”

I will only further say in relation to this unfortunate Cheshunt affair, that those Dissenters who were the chief actors in it, have had their reward. They must be deeply humiliated by the way in which those Churchmen, whose smiles they

courted, now speak of them, and of which I have just given a sample. I should not have alluded to the matter at all, were it not for the confirmation which it furnishes of the views which this volume is written to establish, respecting the surrender of principle in practice, as well as the deadly errors in doctrine, which are so prevalent at the present time.

Among the changes which have of late occurred in the state of religion among us, there is one which no Christian who is observant of what is passing around us can fail to perceive and deplore. I allude to the lax views which prevail so largely, and are still growing, in relation to the sanctity of the Sabbath. That reverence for God's holy day which was once the great characteristic of our country, compared with any other country, and with all other countries in Christendom, is fast losing its hold upon us. In saying this I do not confine my observations to those who, not professing to be religious people, openly desecrate the Sabbath day. I speak only, for the present, of those who are either members of churches or chapels, or regular attendants on the ministrations of preachers who call themselves, and are spoken of by others, as evangelical in their views. Within the last few weeks two sad illustrations of this

have been specially brought under my notice. One Congregationalist minister of the gospel in the metropolis—who is regarded as eminently evangelical in his preaching—made an announcement from the pulpit that, at a specified time and in a specified place, one of the candidates for a seat in Parliament at the coming election, would give an exposition of his political opinions. What was this, but playing the part of a political partisan in the pulpit? and that, too, on the Sabbath-day! To me there is something shocking in the circumstance. How could the preacher who could prostitute his pulpit to such a purpose, expect the Divine blessing to rest on the other solemn services of the sanctuary? How could he even bring himself to ask God's blessing on those services? To my mind the circumstance is all the more sad, inasmuch as few contemporary ministers of the gospel were brought up in early life with more exalted notions than he, respecting the binding obligations of the solemn injunction, "Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy unto the Lord." What makes the matter worse is this other fact,—that, whatever others of this minister's congregation may have thought of this prostitution of the pulpit, and this desecration of the Lord's-day, only one of their number, so

far as my information goes, remonstrated with him on his conduct. The other circumstance to which I allude is that of the Sunday-school teachers in an eastern part of the metropolis, giving to the children a number of notices of a meeting, to be held on a given day in the week, in favour of a particular candidate for a seat in Parliament in the impending election, with instructions to give them to their fathers or friends, with a view to their attending the meeting. Surely this was a lamentable conclusion to the instruction in spiritual and eternal things which had been previously imparted to the children in this Sunday-school.

With regard, also, to that discipline which is enjoined in the New Testament on the churches of Christ, there is, in the majority of our Nonconformist churches, scarcely anything worthy of the name. I appeal, on this point, to the members of such churches themselves. It is for them to say whether or not my representations accord with the facts of the case. Is it not a rare thing for any candidate for church membership to be rejected when he seeks for admission, although many members may have more than doubts as to his fitness for a place among the other members? Is it not equally rare—probably rarer still—for

any one, once admitted, to be excommunicated, even although cases are not of unfrequent occurrence, both in relation to doctrine and conduct, in which they are not walking worthy of the name they bear, or the profession of discipleship to Christ, which they make? It is lamentable to think of the extent to which the world is at this moment intermingled in church fellowship with those who are the true saints of God, the faithful followers of the Lamb. In this respect the change for the worse which has taken place within the last twenty-five years, is so great that it might well cause, and doubtless does cause, all true ministers of the gospel and spiritually-minded private Christians, to wish, with Jeremiah, that their eyes were fountains of tears, that they might weep over the error in doctrine, and consequent looseness of practice, which are at this hour so rife among the members of our churches. The late Dr. Richard Winter Hamilton, of Leeds, stated in a work which he published in 1848, that any minister in the Congregationalist body who was known to hold the doctrine of the non-eternity of future punishments, would be at once expelled from the body. It is otherwise now. I could name no inconsiderable number of Congregationalist ministers, who make no secret of the fact that they

reject the doctrine of eternal punishments, in conjunction with their holding various deadly errors ; and yet, so far from being expelled by the Congregationalist body, are not even remonstrated with against such errors. And not only so, but there are in the list of recognized ministers in the Congregationalist body the names, this very year, of some who openly glory in being Universalists, and preach, Sabbath after Sabbath, and publish works from the press as well, in opposition to the doctrine of eternal punishments. I mention, as one case in point, the name of the Rev. Mr. Kirkus, of Hackney. His name will be found in the "Congregational Year Book" for 1868, although for several years he has been systematically denouncing, both from the pulpit and the press, the dogma, as he delights to call it, of eternal punishments. In conjunction with this, he has been for years directing a succession of the fiercest assaults on all those great central truths which constitute the glory of the gospel. Let me here say, in passing, that, while deploring the great and grievous errors into which Mr. Kirkus has fallen, I admire his honesty and his moral courage in boldly preaching what he believes. Many others of his fellow-ministers secretly hold the same deadly errors, but they shrink from their avowal. Most pro-

bably it is because they share his sentiments that they remain passive, instead of taking action with a view to his expulsion from the Congregationalist body.

What I have said as to the absence of discipline in connection with the limited duration of future punishments and other doctrinal errors, is equally true respecting discipline in relation to the inspiration of the Scriptures. Fourteen or fifteen years ago, three students at the Congregational College, St. John's Wood, were expelled from that theological institution because they did not believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures,—did not believe in their inspiration in any other sense than that in which all great geniuses, such as Shakspeare and Milton are inspired. Apply at the present time the same principle of excommunication in the same and other similar institutions, and I should be curious to learn how many students would be left. If, on this error, and the other doctrinal errors to which I have referred, the work of excommunication were to be rigorously carried out, it would be found, in a lamentable number of cases, that the expelling forces would find ample grounds for beginning with the ministers themselves.

Thus far I have spoken of the pernicious and perilous doctrinal errors which prevail in the

Church of England, and in the Congregational and Baptist denominations. But thus far I have made no allusion to the Wesleyan Methodists, a denomination more numerous in England than either of the two other bodies. Deadly errors, if one of their ministers, writing a few months ago to the *Spectator*, be correct in his statements, have found entrance among them. Rationalism, according to the testimony of this Wesleyan minister, is rife and spreading among the younger ministers of the body. "Now," he says, "as I believe that those ministers of all Protestant creeds, both within and without the Establishment, who embody or have imbibed, the peculiar religious spirit of this age, find themselves converging towards the *Spectator* as the fairest expression of that fearless, generous, and reverent spirit of inquiry to which they would fain attain, you will understand how unwilling I am that you should form an unfavourable estimate of that school of which I am a humble member, especially when that estimate is apparently just, and that only because based upon a half-truth. Of late years the *Spectator* has found its way into the hands of our younger ministers, over whom it exerts no inconsiderable influence. Although we do not fully endorse the distinctive doctrines of your creed, we heartily sympathize

with that superiority over national and sectarian prejudice which enables you to throw over all spiritual poverty and helplessness the mantle of cosmopolitan charity ; and we strive to emulate that frank, honest, honourable method of theological controversy which can only be practised by those who ‘know in whom they have put their trust.’ The fact, therefore, that you will henceforth represent the sentiments and, to a certain extent, the theological tenets of—shall I say?—the Methodist Left, is my plea for the admission of these remarks into your columns.”

If the *Spectator* finds “its way into the hands of the younger ministers” among the Wesleyan Methodist denomination, “exerts no inconsiderable influence” over them, and if the *Spectator* is henceforth to represent the sentiments, and to a certain extent the theology of the younger ministers of the body,—then farewell to Wesleyan Methodism as a mighty religious instrumentality. Its glory, if it has not already departed, is about to depart.

It is one of the most significant signs of the times in connection with the forms of error which are making such alarming progress, that not only every vital doctrine of the gospel is repudiated, but even some of those *facts*, the truth of which, a few years ago, no one professing any

form of Christian faith, would have dreamt of denying. The latest of these fundamental facts in the religion of the gospel, which are repudiated by men professing to be firm believers in Christianity, is that of the resurrection of our Lord. We have, within the last six months, had a melancholy exemplification of this. Before that period Dr. Samuel Davidson, who had for many years been theological tutor in the Lancashire Independent College, but was compelled to resign, or rather, I should say, to use a plainer form of expression, was dismissed because of his extremely rationalistic views, has got so far on the road to infidelity as to deny the resurrection of Christ. This denial, and the reasons which he urges for it, will be found in Dr. Davidson's "Introduction to the Study of the New Testament," published in the present year. His views on this point are first summarized, and then lauded, as indeed the book is as a whole, with all its deadly errors, in an elaborate notice of the work which appeared in a number of the *Contemporary Review*, published five or six months ago. "Dr. Davidson," says the *Contemporary Review*, "rejects the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus, because it is impossible to reconcile the Evangelists with each other." It were useless to quibble about the form of expression which Dr. Davidson

here employs. It would be a sophism were he or any one else to say that it is "the accounts, not the *fact* of the resurrection of our Lord that Dr. Davidson denies." But in justice to Dr. Davidson, I will not ask my readers to be satisfied with either my own version of his views in relation to the resurrection of Christ, or that of the *Contemporary Review*. I will let him speak for himself. Adverting to the views of the resurrection of our Lord held by "honest" persons at variance with Christ's literal resurrection, he proceeds to say:—"They will attribute visions of the risen Jesus, narrated in the gospels, to popular imagination, conceiving that the memoirs could not but depict Him in a form more or less corporeal. Feeling the force of objections to the reanimation of a body, of the contradictory statements of the evangelists, the different points of view taken in Paul's epistles, and the existence of a predisposition to visions in the first Christian believers, they will hesitate to accept the literal. But not the less will they maintain that Christianity does not fall with the denial of the resurrection, especially as the fact is reported in a manner so contradictory, and susceptible of different interpretations. A thing surrounded with historical and other difficulties will not be made a cornerstone in the edifice."

No one can mistake this language. Dr. Davidson does not believe in the "resurrection" of any body, and consequently not in that of our Lord. The "statements of the evangelists on the subject are contradictory." "Different points of view" relative to Christ's resurrection are "taken in Paul's epistles," and there was—so Dr. Davidson says—a predisposition to visions in the first Christian believers. Yet notwithstanding all this, and that the resurrection of our Lord is surrounded with historical and other "difficulties," and the denial of Christ's resurrection, "Christianity does not fall with that denial." It will "not be made a corner-stone in the edifice." If this be not a point blank rejection of the doctrine of Christ's resurrection, and an assertion of the fact that Christianity would still be Christianity without it, I know not in what more explicit language these two points could be formulated.

No one, I repeat, who reads the work from which I have quoted, can doubt that Dr. Davidson as much denies the fact of our Lord's resurrection as he does the accounts given of that fact. And it is no less evident that the writer in the *Contemporary Review* shares Dr. Davidson's opinion on this point. If any doubt could exist on the subject, it would be removed by his approvingly quoting a passage from Professor

Steinmeyer, of Germany, whom the reviewer first characterizes as an "orthodox theologian," and then remarks, "Christianity, in the judgment of Steinmeyer, does not rest on the resurrection of Jesus, but on the crucifixion." The apostles taught us very differently. Their teaching respecting the resurrection of our Lord was to the effect that, if the resurrection of Christ was not a fact, the whole of the Christian system is a delusion. It is without any foundation whatever on which to rest. But the fact is established in nearly all the books of the New Testament. Matthew tells us that many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of their graves after Christ's resurrection. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that Christ showed Himself to his disciples "alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

In the same book of the Acts we read, in another part, as follows: "Whom," namely, Christ, "God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." In the same chapter, with only eight intervening verses, we read: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." Again, it is said, speaking of

the Jews, in the chapter of the Acts which follows:—"And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses." In the chapter which succeeds that from which I have quoted, it is said, still speaking of the Jews:—"Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead." Further on, in the same chapter, we read:—"With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." In the tenth chapter of the same book, at the fortieth and forty-first verses, we read:—"Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." Once more:—"God," says the writer of the Acts, "raised Him," that is, Jesus, "from the dead. And He was seen many days of them which came up from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people." "He hath raised up Jesus again." Lastly, from the Acts:—"God will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Paul tells us, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with

power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Omitting various other conclusive attestations to the great fact of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, which are contained in this same Epistle, I shall confine myself to two or three. "Christ," we are told, "was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." In the eighth chapter it is said, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God." "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." In all the remaining Epistles of Paul, with the exception of that to the Galatians, and the two to the Thessalonians, the doctrine of Christ's resurrection has a prominent place assigned to it. Peter, too, emphatically attests the truth of our Lord's resurrection; and Jesus Himself, in the fifth verse of the first chapter of the Book of Revelation, affirms the fact of his resur-

rection. "Jesus Christ," we read, "who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead." "I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore."

Then there is the other conclusive proof of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which is furnished by the fact of his visible ascension into heaven. He could not have bodily ascended to glory if his body had not been raised from the grave. But his ascension in a bodily form was witnessed by a goodly number of his disciples—how many we are not informed. But this we know, that immediately before parting from them, He *lifted up his hands*,—showing that it was his risen body that ascended,—and blessed them. It is added that the disciples worshipped Him, showing that they were sure they were not the subjects of any illusion. And having thus seen Him ascend, "they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God."

I have thus adverted to some of the abounding and conclusive proofs of the fact of our Lord's resurrection which the New Testament contains. I have done this, because I can clearly see that the foes of our faith—including among the number many who profess to be friends of the religion of Christ—will, before long, seek to deny

or discredit the doctrine of the resurrection of our Lord, as Dr. Davidson and Professor Steinmeyer already do.

That any person of whom a professedly Christian publication should speak of as "an orthodox theologian," should deliberately, and in terms the most explicit, affirm that Christianity does not rest on the resurrection of Jesus, but on the crucifixion, is assuredly the most startling and anomalous thing I have ever met with in the realms of theological controversy. It is so astounding that it is difficult to bring one's mind to the task of replying to it.

There is no truth more clearly or more fully revealed in the New Testament than this, that without the resurrection of Christ his crucifixion would have been of no avail. No one, indeed, could ever have believed in Him as the Redeemer of a ruined race, if He had not risen from the grave. His own disciples would have regarded Him either as an impostor or as a fanatic; for He had again and again told them in private, as He publicly taught, not only that He would rise again from the dead, but that his resurrection would take place on the third day. Had he not so risen as He said, Christianity would have died with Him. He and it would have shared the same grave. But instead of any reasonings of

my own on the subject, a few sentences from Paul will effectually put to silence both Dr. Davidson, and Professor Steinmeyer,—the *Contemporary Review's* “orthodox theologian.” Paul having, in the fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, stated and proved the fact that our Lord had risen from the dead on “the third day according to the Scriptures,” and that He had been seen after his resurrection, by “five hundred brethren at once,” proceeds to say, “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” Were volumes written to show that Christianity *does* rest as much on the “resurrection” of Christ as on his “crucifixion,” they would not establish the fact more conclusively than the two verses which I have just quoted from the fifteenth chapter of Paul’s first Epistle to the Corinthians.

But then comes another consideration of the greatest gravity, and one which verifies all I have said about the virtual infidelity which characterizes the majority of our modern Rationalists. Dean Alford is the acknowledged editor of the *Contemporary Review*, and as such is responsible for the sentiments expressed in it. It is a fair presumption, therefore, that he shares the views of Professor Steinmeyer, relative to the non-

importance of the question as to whether Christ was raised from the dead or not, compared with the fact of his crucifixion. It is no less a fair deduction from the laudatory terms in which the *Review* speaks of the work of Dr. Davidson, in which, as I have shown, the latter “rejects the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus,”—that he concurs in that sentiment,—a sentiment, be it remarked, which at once virtually denies the fact of our Lord’s resurrection, and the inspiration of the Scriptures. Dean Alford cannot escape from this grave charge by saying that the article in question got into the *Contemporary Review* inadvertently, because if that had been so, he would not have allowed another number to have issued from the press, without an emphatic repudiation of the opinions advanced by his contributor, and the expression of his sincere regret that the article should ever have appeared in his pages. Neither could he plead ignorance of ever having seen the article; for the *Record*—and he, I have the best reason for believing, regularly reads the *Record*—called attention to it soon after its appearance, and denounced it, both by correspondents and editorially, as a deadly error. But, indeed, this exhibition of Rationalism is only one of many exhibitions of the system of semi-infidelity which is comprehended under that name. The stated

contributors to the *Contemporary Review*, under the editorial auspices of Dean Alford, appear to be, in the majority of cases, of the Rationalistic type. Some of these contributors to that periodical are, indeed, so ultra in their Rationalism, that they cannot restrain themselves from such exhibitions of their fierce hostility to evangelical religion as violate all the proprieties of life. Not long ago, we had an instance of this, in the person of the Rev. Mr. Haweis, an incumbent of a Church of England chapel, in Marylebone, who tore in pieces, in the presence of his congregation, a petition which had been got up, and which he had been asked to sign, against the errors,—in other words, the infidelity—of Dr. Colenso. And this Mr. Haweis is a frequent and favourite writer in the *Contemporary Review*.

Most persons taking an interest in religious matters are acquainted with the colour of Professor Jowett's theological creed,—if Rationalism can be said to have any creed at all. His contributions to the "Essays and Reviews" gave us a taste of the quality of his beliefs, or rather of his theological negations. But he has lately surpassed any feat in the same infidel direction which he had before performed. Preaching three or four months ago in Bishopsgate Church, and

after representing evangelical religion as a superstitious belief which was being rapidly supplanted by Reason,—in other words, by Rationalism,—he proceeded to institute a comparison between John Bunyan and Spinoza. The author of the “Pilgrim’s Progress” was described as the slave of superstitious views of the gospel of Christ, while Spinoza, who not only was an Atheist, but avowed and gloried in his Atheism, was held up to the world, in the language of one of his biographers, adopted by Mr. Jowett, “as a man of almost faultless nature, one of the best men that ever lived. What is this in effect but preaching Atheism from a pulpit of the Church of England ?

Among late novelties which have been introduced to public notice, under the name of religion, is the system called Positivism. M. Auguste Comte, a Frenchman of world-wide reputation, because of his philosophic and scientific attainments, is the author of the new hypothesis, which made some progress in France during his lifetime, and has done latterly in England. I am not aware that Positivism has acquired a footing in Germany, or, indeed, in any other part of the world. It is a new phase of Atheism. The chief distinction between Pantheism and Positivism consists in this,—that the Pantheists deify all nature, in-

animate as well as animate and rational, while the Positivists confine their Deity to Humanity. The first and fundamental principle of Positivism is to deny the existence of God, or, as its founder blasphemously says, "Positivism has rendered the throne of God vacant, and another divinity must be enthroned in the room of God." The new deity, as I have just remarked, is Humanity. Mankind, as a whole, constitute the new divinity, and is to be reverently worshipped three times a day,—morning, noon, and night. M. Comte, while he lived, took to himself the name, and discharged the functions of High Priest of this deified Humanity. He was the leader of the burlesque on Divine worship which he and his followers rendered to this new deity. The worship consists of what Comte calls "commemoration" and "effusion," the former occupying twice the time apportioned to the latter. By "commemoration," I suppose, is meant expressions of gratitude for past blessings bestowed by and on Humanity, and by "effusion," petitions for good things to come. But the prayers must on no account be for any good for oneself. That would be selfish, and all self is excluded from the system of Positivism. The prayers must be addressed *to* Humanity, *for* Humanity; and in order that more definite ideas may be formed of Humanity,—the

new divinity,—it was symbolized by Comte in his own house in Paris, and worshipped in the form of a woman, about thirty years of age, and holding a child in her arms. What an illustration of the truth of the common observation, that extremes meet. Here we have downright Atheism presented to us in the form of a woman with a child in her arms, as an object for worship—a counterpart to the grand Popish superstition which exacts worship from its devotees to figures of the Virgin Mary, with the child Jesus in her arms. It will be seen at once that while Positivism claims to be the most rational of all systems of “religion,”—for so its votaries call it,—it is ludicrously absurd, and would be laughed out of the world, were it not for its solemn and momentous associations. To pray *for* Humanity *to* Humanity is surely the height of absurdity. Not only so; but Humanity is not, and never can be, an intelligent, much less a Divine being. It has no eyes to see, no ears to hear, no hands to help. Besides this, the Positivist is guilty of another absurdity, namely, that of praying to a part of himself—for he is part of Humanity when he prays to Humanity. And not only so, but in praying *to* Humanity for blessings *for* Humanity, he is praying for blessings to himself as a part of Humanity. And this, too, in violation of one of

the grand principles of his system, that he is to ask no blessings for himself, but that his prayers are to be solely presented for others, as a proof that his own self is to be as thoroughly absorbed in Humanity as a whole, as if he had no separate or individual existence. I need scarcely add that Positivism having "dethroned God," to use the language of its founder, and still employed by his disciples, rejects the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments. In their view there will be no hereafter at all. Death is with them "the end of all things."

The Positivist theory is but little understood either in this or in any other country. The reason is sufficiently cogent why M. Comte's religion—if we must call it by that name—has made no perceptible progress. A few persons, of some position in science and literature, have identified themselves with it, and written books in its favour; and Lord Amberley, and others of rank, with one or two titled ladies, have attended the preaching of its great High Priest in England, Mr. Richard Congreve. Mr. Congreve is the translator of "The Catechism of Positive Religion," by Auguste Comte, and author of "The New Religion in its Attitude to the Old." The only other English writer of note in favour of Positivism is Dr. J. R. Bridges, son of

one of the most evangelical and excellent clergymen in the Church of England. The work in favour of this Atheistical creed, under a new name, of which he is the translator, is called "A General View of Positivism," by Auguste Comte himself. Mr. G. H. Lewes has given an exposition of Comte's theory under the title of "Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences," but Mr. Lewes does not commit himself to all the views of Comte. Miss Harriet Martineau, always ready to lend a helping hand to any and every form of Atheism, has published a translation, in two volumes, of "Comte's Positive Philosophy." These are all the philosophers or authors of note, so far as I am aware, who, in this country, have become avowed advocates of Positivism.

But it has, both in France and in this country, several adherents of high social position. In Paris, from forty to fifty meet every Sunday for Positivist worship in the very room in which Auguste Comte died; and in a hotel in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street, the Positivists in London meet regularly—or did so some months ago—for worship, Mr. Congreve acting as the High Priest. I could name, but will not, more than one lady of title who lately attended—if they do not still—these Positivist "ministrations;" but I may mention, as the fact has been referred to in some

of the public journals, that Lord Amberley—Earl Russell's son, and heir to the title and estates of his father—was, on various occasions, one of the most seemingly devout worshippers of Humanity, instead of the only living and true God, at these Positivist gatherings. But no one need be surprised at this who is acquainted with Lord Amberley's writings in the *Fortnightly Review*,—a publication which, if not avowedly, or in so many express terms, established for the purpose of undermining Christianity, and erecting an edifice of Atheism on its ruins, has ever since its commencement, laboured most zealously and assiduously, in the way which its editors and chief contributors have deemed most calculated to produce these results.

And probably among the writers in the *Fortnightly Review* no one has been more bold or more strenuous than Lord Amberley in the advocacy of Atheism. Not content with what can be done by mere argument for that revolting creed, Lord Amberley actually proposes that there should be chairs in our Universities, with paid professors, for the express purpose of teaching Atheism. In such cases, I always make a point of giving the very words of the writer, so as to preclude the possibility of being supposed either to misrepresent or misconceive their meaning.

Let me, then, quote what Lord Amberley says in relation to the appointment and endowment of chairs of Atheism in our Universities :—" Since," he says, " it is eminently desirable that heresy should be taught, it would be right that where the clergy are unendowed, there should exist, either through the medium of professors' chairs at universities, or in some other way, the means of supporting learned men who may be wholly free to inculcate whatever opinions they happen to believe, without the fear of suffering for so doing." By the word " heresy," as here employed, Lord Amberley evidently means infidelity in all its diversified forms, from its lowest up to its highest development in absolute Atheism. What precedes and follows places this beyond all doubt. In one place this " noble " Positivist says :—" Since the nation comprises unbelievers as well as believers, it remains to be shown why the former should be debarred from the clerical life any more than the latter. For there is no inherent and general defect either in the lives or doctrines of unbelievers that can of itself unfit them for the profession of a clergyman. Religious truth is one. But of such truth we neither know nor can know anything, because we are not omniscient."

The word " unbelievers," as here employed,

if not exclusively applied to Atheists, at least includes that class of persons in its comprehensive embraces. So that Lord Amberley would open all the pulpits of that National Church, which he seeks to see established in this country, to as many Atheists as choose to take what, I presume, would still be called "holy orders" in the Church. And to facilitate the entrance of infidels of all grades into this new National Church, Lord Amberley proposes that the Legislature should adopt the following course:—"The matter," he says, "might be arranged by a parliamentary declaration, that the reading of the Liturgy was to be regarded as a public duty, not of necessity implying any mental agreement or consent on the part of the reader. If the parishioners desired any particular portion of the service omitted, it would be reasonable to give them the power of enforcing this wish."

Adopt Lord Amberley's notion respecting a National Church, and our pulpits will not only be crowded with clerical infidels, from Atheists down to the lowest form of Deism, who would be the preachers of systematic falsehood of the grossest kind, by reading a service as if they implicitly believed in it all, while in their inmost hearts they not only disbelieved in it, but abhorred particular portions of it. In

the case, indeed, of the Atheistical part of the clergy, they would not believe in *any* portion of it,—not even in such portions as recognized the existence of God. But as regards such views as those advocated by Lord Amberley, I will not venture into any argument with him. The simple statement of their character is a sufficient answer to them. I will only remark, that these are the views, and such would be the policy, if he had the power to carry it out, of the son and successor to the title and estates of a nobleman who for nearly forty years had a seat in the councils of the Sovereign, and was for many years Prime Minister of England.

When, therefore, Lord Amberley's notions have become the law of the land, and it is no longer necessary for the clergy of his "reformed" National Church to believe in anything, not even in the being of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments, there is no reason why Mr. Bradlaugh should not take "holy orders," and become a Dean or a Bishop,—none, indeed, why he should not attain to the highest of all ecclesiastical dignities, that of Archbishop of Canterbury,—the Primate of all England,—the occupant of Lambeth Palace.

Here I must remark, which I do with great

grief, as one of the most lamentable of all the lamentable signs of the times, and one which we witness in all directions, that Atheism is making rapid progress among us,—and in, I believe, about the same proportions among the higher, the middle, and the lower classes, regard being had to the relative numbers of each of the classes. Mr. Bradlaugh, one of the most extreme Atheists of the day, and whose language is often characterized by the rankest blasphemy, boasts, that in the brief period of eight months he has sold from 7000 to 8000 of his publications, advocating Atheism in the most absolute form in which it was ever presented to our gaze. And even more significant still, this Atheist of Atheists, who is now candidate for Northampton, has received an amount of support which renders the two other candidates, Lord Henley and Mr. Charles Gilpin, uneasy as to the result of the election. Who, a few years ago, could have deemed it within the pale of possibility that such a state of things could exist? We cannot for a moment allow ourselves to suppose that such a man can ever be chosen as their representative in Parliament by the constituency of Northampton. That would be the greatest disgrace that could befall that borough; but is it not discreditable in the highest degree that he

should have already received so much support as to induce him to persevere in the contest, buoyed up with the hope that he will be returned? Either Northampton must swarm with Atheists, or persons calling themselves Christians must be giving their support to the atheistic Mr. Bradlaugh. It would not surprise us were the latter to be the case to some extent, when we know that a clergyman of standing, in London, and who has always been regarded as extreme in his evangelicism, supports Mr. John Stuart Mill, or did support him at the last election, although not only knowing that Mr. Mill is an Atheist in the most absolute sense of the term, but on all occasions parades and glories in his Atheism. When remonstrated with on the gross inconsistency of his conduct, this clergyman, in reply, said, that he saw no reason why Atheists, as well as other men, should not be members of the House of Commons. Let the notions of this "minister of the gospel" be carried out to their full extent, and there can be no sufficient reason why, if they are so disposed, the constituencies of the country should not return a majority of Atheists to Parliament,—in which case we should not be surprised should we hear, some day, that a resolution had been carried in the representative branch of our legislature, in imitation of the

French revolutionary Chamber of 1798, affirming that there is no God, and that death is an eternal sleep.

In connection with the various forms which unbelief has of late assumed, from the advanced Atheism of which Mr. Bradlaugh is the self-styled apostle, down to the more modified form of Deism calling itself Unitarianism, a new sect was established, six months ago, in a handsome house near the South Kensington Museum. The great, indeed the sole bond of union among this new sect, is that of having no creed at all,—in other words, if there be not a contradiction in the terms, the creed of its members is their disbelief in and rejection of all creeds. In the list which I have seen of some of the more prominent members, I find the names of well-known contributors to the *Westminster Review* and other periodicals identifying themselves with infidel principles. The account which has reached me of the proceedings at the inauguration of this new creedless sect, states that it comprises many persons of great wealth, and no inconsiderable number of ladies moving in the higher spheres of society. The account referred to adds, that the new sect “would have no difficulty in raising, in a single day, £10,000 to build a church.” Who can read this statement

without asking himself,—Whither are we going in our religious beliefs? When or where shall this almost universal scepticism come to an end?

We have recently had another exemplification of theological error by one of the Scotch Episcopal bishops, of a very extraordinary kind. If, indeed, this error were to be generally embraced, it would prove utterly subversive of the Gospel of Christ. The author of this new gospel is the “Bishop of Argyll and the Isles.” The sermon in which this “other gospel,” which is no gospel, was first made known to the world was preached one Sunday last summer in Westminster Abbey. The *Spectator* speaks of this sermon in terms of admiration which could not be exceeded. That journal rises, indeed, into unrestrainable rapture at the fact that this “noble sermon” should ever have been preached from one of the pulpits of our land. The bishop’s text was, “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” Listen to the sympathising and admiring *Spectator’s* account of this sermon: “It was an attempt to reconcile the faith in a God of such light with the darkness which we see actually in the shape of both scepticism and sin around us. The bishop’s faith was that the delay, the tardiness in the coming of God’s kingdom, is necessitated by the sort of kingdom which alone God has shown his purpose

through Christ to establish—a kingdom not imposed by him, but accepted and implored by us—a kingdom to the light of which we shall have worked our own way intellectually and morally. God will not put all things under his feet in the sense of ‘force,’ but will have all things put themselves under his feet ‘in the way of choice.’ In other words, science must find its way to God by its own light, and the spirit by its own free choice ; and God will wait for this, however long, rather than strain the human intellect and conscience by too overwhelming a manifestation of his own power and will.”

The *Spectator* most happily characterises the bishop’s sermon as an “attempt” to do certain things which are in themselves moral impossibilities, and, therefore, cannot be accomplished, however much the attempt may be made. He proposes to show that the kingdom of God has not yet come, because we have not worked our way to it by our intellectual and moral light. “Science,” he adds, “must find its way to God by its own light, and the spirit by its own free choice, and God will wait for this, however long, rather than strain the human intellect and conscience by too overwhelming a manifestation of his own power and will.”

It is difficult to know how to deal with such

transcendant absurdities as are embraced in these utterances of the Bishop of Argyll. Our knowledge of God is not, it seems, according to this new gospel of the Bishop of Argyll, to be acquired through that Book which is generally regarded as a revelation of the mind and will of God to mankind. The world, through science, is to find its way to God solely by its own unaided light. Paul has a different creed from the bishop. He tells us that in his day, and in the four thousand years of the world's history which preceded his era, the world, by wisdom, knew not God. On the contrary, the wisdom of the world, prevented the knowledge of Him. All history confirms the testimony of Paul. There is not an instance on record of any one on earth ever finding his way to God by the knowledge of science, or by his own wisdom in any form. So far from men's science or intellectualism enabling them to work their way to God, they did not enable them to find out his being. And when Christianity revealed his existence and attributes, mankind would not receive the revelation made to them. The Greeks rejected the Gospel as "foolishness." No one ever yet formed an idea of the nature of God, or even of his existence, except through the revelations of Him made to men in the Scriptures. Never were there so intellectual a

people as the Greeks, yet they were no exception to this. If, therefore, men will not “work their way to God,” until it is done by the light of science, no one will ever find his way to God at all. This fact must of necessity be better known to God than to us, and yet we are told by this bishop, that, though the thing never can take place, God “will wait for this, however long,”—which is saying, in effect, that God will wait for countless ages for that which He knows never will or can take place. Is there not something inconceivably awful in the thought that a man who knows the Scriptures, and possesses, too, the ecclesiastical status of a bishop, should thus represent the light of science, not the light of the Bible, as the only thing which can enable any sinner to find his way to God; and that God should be represented as subordinating Himself to his sinful creatures, by consenting to wait for this, however long, even for more millions of years, if necessary, than we can compute? There is, in reality, nothing less than mingled presumption and positive blasphemy in the language of this Scotch prelate.

Coming from any quarter where the Bible is professed to be believed not only to be a special revelation of the mind and will of God, but to be the only revelation the saving sense of the

term,—the passage I have quoted would be sufficiently surprising, but coming from a Scotch bishop, who had hitherto been regarded as a Ritualist of an ultra type, this worse than Broad Church,—this *no church teaching*, cannot fail to fill with utter amazement every one who reads it.

But, after all, most persons will regard the recently-expressed sentiments of another bishop, or rather, I should say, an ex-bishop, as even still more pernicious and startling. I refer to the views advanced in a pamphlet published, in August last, by Dr. Hind, late Bishop of Norwich. The object of his publication—for the ex-Bishop of Norwich, still glories in his being a member of the Church of England—is to show, not only that clergyman holding Deistical, or even Atheistical opinions, may remain in the Anglican Church pulpits of the land, but that if they have made up their minds to resign the clerical functions, and cease to belong to the Church of England, they may, and they *ought* to endeavour, before withdrawing from their office as clergymen, to bring over as many as possible of their congregations to their Deistical or Atheistical creed, and that with this view they ought to preach from their pulpits their own infidel sentiments. I could conceive of no more flagrant,

no more frightful immorality than this ex-Bishop of Norwich thus inculcates on the clergy of the Anglican Church. I believe it has no parallel in ecclesiastical history. As I have not space for copious extracts from the ex-Prelate's pamphlet, I prefer giving a summary of his views, written by a reviewer who, in the main, concurs with him, to any account of those views drawn up by myself. "Even," says this sympathizing reviewer, "even if a clergyman doubted the fundamental truths of religion itself, if he rejected the whole Christian scheme, if he passed over to the camp of M. Comte, if he denied the doctrine of a life beyond the grave, and if he ended by a firm belief in the blankest Atheism, still, before withdrawing from the Church, he would be bound by voice and pen to use all his episcopal efforts for the conversion of Christian people to his new evangel."

Well may Bishop Hind's friendly reviewer add:—"Here at least is a bold statement. There is no playing with vague phrases in the approved sacerdotal fashion. Here surely, in the words of an English prelate who has won a high reputation for ability, we have a striking sign of the times."

The audacious, the astounding immorality of the counsels which are thus given to the clergy,

will appear more clearly when I mention that at their ordination all clergymen come under obligations, having all the solemnity of an oath, to preach the doctrines contained in the articles, the creeds, and the homilies of the Church. It is especially enjoined on them, and they virtually take an oath to that effect,—that they shall do all in their power to drive away all heresies and false doctrines. Now, surely Deism and Atheism are the very worst forms which heresy and false doctrine could assume. Yet Dr. Hind, lately a bishop, deliberately and earnestly advises all those of the clergy who have adopted infidel views to continue to occupy their pulpits, preaching infidelity instead of Christianity to their congregations; but that, if they have resolved not to remain in their pulpits, they should earnestly and systematically endeavour to make as many converts as possible to their own Deistical or Atheistical views before they resign their clerical functions.

There is something overwhelmingly astounding in this. It is difficult to believe that any man professing Christianity—and especially that one who was for many years, and until recently, a bishop,—should give such counsels to the clergy. One can hardly realize the fact, that any person professing to be a believer in Christ could

have written and published a pamphlet having this for its sole object. Well may the sympathizing reviewer, from whom I have quoted, say, "In the words of an English prelate who has won a high reputation for ability," that surely this is a striking sign of the times. Dr. Hind, some years ago, resigned prelatie functions, owing to some strange notions about the state of his health ; but even had he still been the occupant of the see of Norwich, he would have been permitted to remain in the Church after the publication of this revolting pamphlet. Could a single fact be adduced to prove more conclusively the fearfully corrupt state in which the Church of England is at the present moment?

THE EXISTING RELIGIOUS CRISIS: OUR DANGERS AND OUR DUTIES.

PART THIRD.

LET us now advert briefly to the Religious Press. The state of matters in the Press, as regards the great cardinal doctrines divinely revealed, is no less deplorable and discouraging. I have made a passing allusion to this in my Preface. I could prove conclusively, by specifying a number of facts which no one could gainsay, that our religious periodical literature has, in the great majority of instances, ceased to be religious journals at all,—I mean in the sense in which the word “religious” has been hitherto understood. With a very few exceptions, there is nothing in our theological journalistic literature which could truthfully be called spiritual. This holds equally good in relation alike to our weekly, monthly, and quarterly Christian publications. There is no lack of moral essays or sketches in our so-called religious periodical literature, but there is almost, with the few exceptions to which I have referred

nothing of an evangelical savour to be found in their pages,—nothing of a purely practical or experimental nature. Even could I spare the space, it would not be necessary that I should go into a detail of facts confirmatory of my position. In the very reception—in the majority of cases, the enthusiastic reception—which was accorded to “*Ecce Homo*,” by our religious periodicals, when that work appeared, furnished enough, nay, more than enough, to demonstrate the lamentable falling away from evangelical principles which characterizes the theological journalism of the present day. For one religious periodical which condemned “*Ecce Homo*,” there were at least six or seven that, on the whole, warmly commended it. And this remark applies to all classes of our theological periodicals, from the quarterlies down to the weeklies. Some of them, indeed—and these the least suspected of having fallen away from the truth as it is in Jesus—were altogether lost in the extent of their admiration of the work,—a work which not only divests our Lord of his divinity, but denudes Him of that perfection as man which even infidels themselves have most freely and fully accorded to Him. In the very outset of his work, the author of “*Ecce Homo*” says that that which rendered the enterprise of Christ possible, *if it did not suggest it*, was the *happy*

accident that men had come to believe themselves immortal,—that our modern men of science are greater than Moses,—and that it is a problem which yet remains to be solved, *whether, on the whole, mankind has gained by Christianity*. There is something most dishonouring to Christ, viewed only as a man, in the assertion, that the success of his endeavour to form a society of followers was to be ascribed to a *happy accident*, if, indeed, the idea was not suggested by this happy accident. This is placing our Lord in the same category as Mahomet. It is representing Him as being bent, just as Mahomet was, on establishing in the world a new sect who should regard Him as their head, and leader, and master. It is, in other words, practically asserting that there was no truth in Christ's own words, when He declared that He “came not to do His own will, but the will of Him,”—God the Father,—“who sent Him.” Equally decided is the contradiction which the author of “*Ecce Homo*” gives to the words of our Lord, when the latter says that “He came to seek and to save the lost.” No, says that author; Christ did not come to save souls at all. He came to organize a new sect, who should recognize Him as their head. And yet, with all this staring them in the face, in the pages of “*Ecce Homo*,” the reviewers of that work, in the great

majority of our religious journals, wrought themselves into absolute ecstasies in their admiration of the volume. The *Freeman*, the weekly organ of the Baptist denomination, spoke of it as a book which could not fail to inaugurate a new development in our theology, which would terminate in a grand revolution in our religious modes of thought and convictions. The *Freeman*—and so did some other of our religious periodicals regarded as evangelical,—surpassed in its rapturous admiration of “*Ecce Homo*,” even the *Nonconformist* itself, although there is no journal, having anything of the theological element in it, which is “more advanced” in its Rationalism than that paper.

I regret, for reasons which I will not name, this proof of the *Freeman's* unfaithfulness to the truth as it is in Jesus. These reasons are known to many, though I do not think it expedient to mention them. By a curious coincidence—let me say parenthetically—just as I had penned this last sentence, I met with a paragraph in the *Freeman*, quoted from the *London Review*, but evidently approved of by the organ of the Baptist body, in which, after much laudation of Mr. John Stuart Mill, notwithstanding his avowed Atheistical beliefs, this sentence occurs:—“It is notorious, that not only such

men as Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, but *the great mass of intelligent Christian people*, can read, ENJOY, and even SYMPATHIZE with, the warmest passages, in which he tilts against prevalent religious opinions." This appeared in the *Freeman* of the 25th September. And can it really be possible, that a journal which is the recognized weekly organ of an evangelical body of Christians, can give its sanction to the assertion that the GREAT MASS of intelligent Christian people can *enjoy* and even *sympathize* with Mr. Mill's attacks on the religion of Christ? For that is the obvious meaning of the phrase,—“His tilts against prevalent religious opinions.” All I shall say is, that the religion of those who constitute “this great mass of intelligent Christians,” is in my view utterly worthless. Their religion is not, in reality, Christianity at all. If the statement be true, it more than justifies all I have said about the deplorable condition of religion amongst us.

But to return to the reviews of “*Ecce Homo*” given by religious journals. Recognized organs of Congregational, and of other denominations as well, bearing the name of evangelical, were also lavish in their praise of “*Ecce Homo*.” And in simply stating the fact,—one which is as patent to all the readers of our religious periodi-

cal literature as to myself, I feel that I need not add one single word in proof of my proposition, that "Ichabod"—"the glory is departed"—may be inscribed on the covers of the great majority of our religious periodicals. What a contrast do our current religious magazines and reviews present to the religious periodical literature of half a century, or even of a quarter of a century ago. Some of them bear the same title, but, alas ! how different in spirit, in sentiment, in character !

And if we turn from our religious periodical literature to our general religious literature, we find that there is a corresponding deterioration in its character and tendencies, compared with what it was in the past generation. In the majority of the volumes published at the present day on religious subjects and under religious titles, we have either a greatly diluted Gospel, or that, under the name of the Gospel, which is no Gospel. I do not complain that, in point of colossal intellect, we have no Leightons, no Owens, no Goodwins, no Howes, no Baxters, no Rutherfords, no Bostons, among us at the present time ; but with the exception of a very few Cecils, Hawkers, M'Cheynes, Hewitsons, Howels, Harington Evans', and one or two others who can be mentioned, who, in the doctrinal matter

of their sermons, could be named, since the beginning of the present century, as worthy to be compared with the eminently spiritually-minded divines of the latter part of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries? And what constitutes a melancholy addition to the grounds on which we have to deplore this state of things is, that matters, instead of getting better, are getting worse and worse. Where it is all to end, is a point on which I forbear to speculate; but at present it looks as if, in a few years, it will be a very rare thing to meet with ministers in any of our so-called evangelical denominations, in which the truths as it is in Jesus will be faithfully taught, in regard to the soundness of the doctrine, in conjunction with that earnestness and unction, without which the mere enunciation of the truth, whether from the pulpit or the press, never has converted sinners nor sanctified believers, nor ever will.

But neither of the sources I have mentioned are the only sources whence the religion of the Lord Jesus suffers at the present time. Many of our most popular authors, in the walks of our general literature, are doing incalculable injury to the cause of evangelical religion,—which is but another name for that religion

which alone can be made the instrument of saving souls.

I have, in my Preface, mentioned the name of Dr. George Macdonald, as an author who is doing boundless mischief in this way. Not content with writing three-volume novels for the purpose, as the *Spectator* states, of entering his protest against the eternity of future punishments, he labours hard to make his hero's faith—as the same journal says in reviewing his last work, entitled “Robert Falconer”—crumble into ashes beneath the weight of his doubts. But this is not all. He makes this same hero—for in Dr. Macdonald's last novel he has more than one hero—sympathize with Satan himself. “In reading,” says Dr. Macdonald, “the ‘Paradise Lost,’ he [his hero] could not help sympathizing with Satan, and feeling—I do not say thinking—that the Almighty was pompous, scarcely reasonable, and somewhat revengeful” ! The latter part of this language is simply blasphemous. It makes one shudder to read it. And yet—who would believe it?—Dr. Macdonald was trained for the Christian ministry ; and not only so, but entered it, and for years preached as a believer in evangelical doctrines. Even within the last twelve months he has repeatedly preached, as a Congregationalist minister, in several Scottish

pulpits, and in one, at least, in the Euston Road, London.

Another novelist, like Dr. Macdonald, and also, like him, conventionally called a minister of the Gospel, has done much by his unscriptural views to injure the cause of religion. I allude to the Rev. Mr. Kingsley. This last-named gentleman is incomparably better known by his novels than by anything he has done in his clerical capacity. In a volume of sermons by him, which he published some time ago, there is one which he preached more than two years since in Westminster Abbey. In the sermon in question Mr. Kingsley advances an argument which I have never met with before against the endless duration of future punishments. It is in substance this,—that the tendency of human governments, and indeed of mankind in general in civilized lands, has of late been in favour of lenient punishments ; and that, inasmuch as man cannot be more merciful or generous than God, the inference may be confidently deduced, that punishments hereafter will only be of limited duration. I could conceive of nothing more feeble in the form of reasoning than this. It is worse than worthless considered as an argument. There is something fearfully profane—something awfully daring—in the very idea of God

taking a lesson from his creatures. Instead of their being enjoined, as they are in Scripture, to be followers of God as dear children, they are, in effect, held up by Mr. Kingsley as examples worthy of imitation by God. The very idea is one from which all who really reverence God must recoil with a feeling of horror. It is bringing God down to the level of men. It is doing more : it is even setting man up as being wiser than God ; it is, practically, sitting in judgment on God. It were well for Mr. Kingsley, and for those who share this particular opinion of his in relation to punishment in the world to come, were they to remember God's own words expressive of his displeasure with those of whom He said, "Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself ; but I will reprove thee." It is a fearful thing—it is the sin of presumption in its very worst form—to seek to conform the administration of the moral government of God to our views of what the Divine government ought to be. Instead of offering any argument in opposition to the monstrous notion, that because there is a tendency in human governments, and with men in general, to be lenient in relation to the infliction of punishments, that therefore God must be too merciful to doom any of his creatures to endless

misery,—I would remind them of God's own words, spoken on a memorable occasion, and spoken by his own lips :—" My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways ; but as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways above your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Another of our most eminent literary men, namely, Mr. Tennyson, has been lately hailed by the Universalists as a great accession, to use their own language, to the "broad theology of the day." We all know what that means. It means that modified form of infidelity which goes by the name of Rationalism. The following stanzas from the Poet Laureate's "In Memoriam," are quoted by this class of persons with a gusto which could not be greater were it the best poetry which ever proceeded from human pen ; whereas, regarded simply as poetry, it is very poor. But it is enough for them that it asserts the belief of the writer in the limited duration of future punishments, and the ultimate restoration of all intelligent beings. The lines alluded to are these :—

" Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

“ That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete ;

“ That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

“ Behold, we know not anything ;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

“ So runs my dream : but what am I
An infant crying in the night :
An infant crying for the light :
And with no language but a cry.”

I have mentioned the name of Mr. Carlyle in my Preface as one whose writings are largely pervaded by Pantheism, Mr. John Stuart Mill's are no less so by Atheism. The same may be said of Miss Martineau's works. Mr. Matthew Arnold systematically assails Christianity in magazines and volumes, in poetry and prose, representing it as a gigantic fraud which is just beginning to be detected, and will very soon be entirely exploded. I will only mention one other name, though I could mention names by the score, as belonging to the category of eminent literary men who disbelieve in the more important doctrines of Scripture, and who in

their writings, and by their conversation in society as well, are doing great damage to the cause of Christian truth. That name is no other than Mr. Ruskin's. I mention his name with a special regret, because until lately we had every seeming reason to hope better things of him. Not only was he a regular hearer of the most popular preacher of the age, and from whose pulpit he habitually listened to the most evangelical ministrations of any living servant of Christ in the present day, but in his "Stones of Venice," and other works, he advocated, with transcendent eloquence and consummate ability, the great essential truths of the Gospel. Just only listen to his exposure of the sophistries of Universalism, in its relation to the duration of future punishments, in the course of his enunciation and advocacy of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion. In meeting the argument so often urged against eternal punishments, grounded on the love or goodness of God, Mr. Ruskin proves that in nature and providence in this world, God mingles his threatenings with his promises, misery with mercy,—from which he logically infers that God, in the administration of his moral government in another state of being, will be found to be as faithful in the execution of his threatenings against the ungodly, as

He will be true in the fulfilment of his promises to his people. “And this,” says Mr. Ruskin, “is equally the case with respect to all the other destructive phenomena of the universe. From the mightiest of them to the gentlest—from the earthquake to the summer shower, it will be found that they are attended with certain aspects of threatening, which strike terror into the hearts of multitudes more numerous a thousandfold than those who actually suffer from the ministries of judgment ; and that, besides the fearfulness of these immediately dangerous phenomena, there is an occult and subtle horror belonging to many aspects of the creation around us, calculated often to fill us with serious thought, even in our times of quietness and peace. I understand not the most dangerous, because most attractive form of modern infidelity, which, pretending to exalt the beneficence of the Deity, degrades it into a reckless infinitude of mercy and blind obliteration of the work of sin, and which does this chiefly by dwelling on the manifold appearances of God’s kindness on the face of creation. Such kindness is indeed everywhere and always visible, but not alone. Wrath and threatening are invariably mingled with the love ; and in the utmost solitudes of nature, the existence of Hell seems to me as legibly declared, by a thousand spiritual

utterances, as that of Heaven. It is well for us to dwell with thanksgiving on the unfolding of the flower, and the falling of the dew, and the sleep of the green fields in the sunshine; but the blasted trunk, the barren rock, the moaning of the bleak winds, the roar of the black, perilous, merciless whirlpools of the mountain-streams, the solemn solitudes of moors and seas, the continual fading of all beauty into darkness, and of all strength into dust—have these no language for us? We may seek to escape their teaching by reasonings touching the good which is wrought out of all evil; but it is vain sophistry! The good succeeds to the evil as day succeeds to night, but so also the evil to the good. Gerizim and Ebal, birth and death, light and darkness, heaven and hell, divide the existence of man and his Futurity. The love of God, is, however, always shown by the predominance or greater sum of good in the end, but never by the annihilation of evil. The modern doubts of eternal punishment are not so much the consequence of benevolence as of feeble powers of reasoning. Every one admits that God brings finite good out of finite evil. Why not, therefore, infinite good out of infinite evil?"

But, alas! we are constrained to say, in common candour, that Mr. Ruskin's opinions have

undergone a great change for the worse, since he penned the above magnificent piece of writing. We fear that he now, in the main, shares Mr. Carlyle's views on religion. We would not refer to these circumstances, were it not that Mr. Ruskin himself makes no secret of the change his views on religion have undergone, but, on the contrary, openly mentions the matter in society, and will most probably, ere long, make the change in his sentiments public, through the medium of the press. His case is only one out of myriads at the present day. Once men abandon any vital point in their religious creed, they descend, step by step, till they reach the lowest depths of unbelief. But let us fondly hope that Mr. Ruskin may yet be brought back to a full belief—even to a firmer belief than before—of those great truths of the Gospel, of which he has proved himself so able an advocate in past times.

I have thus adverted at length to some of the many of the "DEADLY ERRORS OF THE DAY." I might have mentioned and exposed various others more or less dishonouring to God, and destructive, where embraced, to the souls of men; but that may not be. The limits within which I must confine my work forbid that. All that I can further do is to speak in general terms

of "THE RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES OF THE TIMES." Those "tendencies" demonstrably are towards a virtual repudiation of all that is vital in the Gospel of Christ. Ministers teach for the doctrines of our Lord and Saviour the commandments of men,—that is, their own opinions; or as Paul, in his First Epistle to Timothy, says, "the doctrine of devils." It is another gospel, in all its essential points, from that taught by Christ and his apostles, that is now taught in the majority of our pulpits. Let any one compare the epistles of Paul with the sermons preached by most of those who call themselves the ministers of Christ at the present day, and they will have difficulty in discovering the slightest resemblance between the theology of Paul and that of these professed ministers of Christ. Paul at all times gloried in the cross of Christ, and everywhere preached that great cardinal doctrine, without which the gospel is deprived of its very life. In most of our present pulpits, the Cross is still an "offence," and is consequently either not named, or only in a mere passing way. The doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, without the works of the law, or any merits of one's own, is to a fearful extent ignored in our modern pulpits. Then again, the absolute necessity to salvation of the new birth, is a doctrine which rarely falls on the ears

of most of our congregations. From perhaps the majority of our pulpits it is never heard at all. The personality and the work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of the sinner, and the sanctification of the believer in Christ, form no part of the pulpit programmes of most of our modern ministers. They preach "another Gospel" than that of our Lord Jesus Christ. Each of them has a gospel of his own, of which Satan cordially approves, because nothing could more effectually do his work. So far from conversions taking place under the ministrations of such preachers, they become impossible, unless accomplished by a miracle of Divine mercy. The language of Paul is never heard from any of those who compose the congregation of this class of ministers,—mistakenly spoken of as ministers of Christ's Gospel. Their hearers are sent into a profound spiritual sleep, from which, where sovereign grace does not come to their rescue, they awake in the regions of utter despair. The class of pastors of whom I am speaking show no solicitude for the salvation of souls, because they never feel the slightest concern on that account. They do not press on their hearers the acceptance of the Saviour, because they have no idea that their congregations are lost; and their congregations go merrily along the broad road which

leadeth to perdition, because they have no idea of what their destiny will be in the world to come ; nor will they, until their souls, like the soul of the rich man in the Gospel, are required of them. No endeavour is made to arouse the careless from their indifference to the things of God and eternity. No appeal is made to their consciences, no warning given them to flee from the wrath to come, by repairing without a moment's delay to the cross of Christ. Instead of dealing with the consciences of the unconverted,—instead of first holding over their heads “the terrors of the Lord,” and then pressing on their acceptance the offer of a full and free salvation with which a free grace gospel so largely abounds,—they speak peace to them, while He who will be their final Judge is ringing in their ears, “There is no peace to the wicked.” Instead of preaching the Gospel as it was preached by Christ and his apostles, by the Reformers, by Wesley and Whitfield, and as it still, happily, is by a faithful few in all our evangelical denominations,—they preach a cold, vague, heartless morality, which might have been taught with as much effect had Christ never come into our world to suffer and to die for sinners. The discourses of Socrates or Plato were quite as good in a moral point of view—and incomparably su-

perior intellectually—as the majority of sermons which are delivered in our modern pulpits. Under such preaching it were, humanly speaking, an impossibility that any sinner could be saved. In the words of David Brainerd, the devoted and distinguished missionary to the American Indians more than a century ago, “Solemn applications of Divine truth to the conscience tend directly to strike death to the root of all evil; while smooth and plausible harangues on moral motives and external duties, at best are likely to do no more than lop off the branches of corruption, while the root of all sin remains still untouched.” And such, Mr. Brainerd adds, he found to be his own experience among the Red Indians amidst whom he latterly lived and laboured, and such we find the fact to be among our civilized Christian congregations in Great Britain.

Those persons calling themselves ministers of Christ’s Gospel, who either preach positive errors of the kind to which I have referred, or who do not faithfully preach the truth as it is in Jesus, not only imperil the salvation of the souls of their people, but bring an amount of guilt on themselves, which, in the prospect of that day when they shall have to stand before the Great White Throne, may well appal the stoutest heart

among them. In the day when God shall make inquisition for blood, the blood of the congregations of this class of preachers He will require at their hand. The Old Testament is remarkable for its awful denunciations of those priests who caused God's people to err by their false and unfaithful teaching. Our Lord, too, was frequent and most forcible in the judgments which He pronounced upon those teachers of religion in his day who failed to fulfil the ministerial functions to which they had been specially set apart; while in one sentence Paul places before us as terrible a destiny as the mind could conceive for those who preach doctrines at variance with the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Writing to the Galatians in relation to the deadly errors which had been preached to them, the apostle of the Gentiles said:—"Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." This is awful language. No language could more forcibly set forth the greatness of the guilt of preaching deadly errors, and the terrible consequences which will follow, than this passage from the writings of Paul. If not even an angel could escape the appalling judgments of God, were that angel to preach a different class of doctrines from those which

Paul preached, I leave it to those who habitually preach another gospel to say what will be their destiny on the last great day. It is a solemn consideration. Would that every one calling himself a minister of Christ's Gospel, of whom what I have said is true, were seriously to lay my words of warning to heart.

But I must not further dwell on this most solemn and most important phase of my subject. I am now approaching the close of my work, and trust that I have spoken faithfully and freely. The issues involved in the points to which I have adverted, are too momentous to admit of any want either of explicitness or earnestness. All the vital "Errors" I have pointed out are but other names for the "DANGERS" to which ourselves and the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ are exposed. We see those "deadly errors" which I have enumerated—but the limits of my volume do not admit of a complete enumeration of them—extending in all directions, with a rapidity which is absolutely appalling; and therefore each of us is called upon to be on his guard against being carried away by the destructive flood. Let us all, in the contemplation of this fearful state of things, remember the warning necessary at all times for the believer in Christ, but especially so at this great crisis in the Religion

of Jesus,—“Let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” When I think of the distressing fact that ministers of the Gospel and private Christians, whom, humanly speaking, I should, only a few years ago, have deemed the least likely, of all the men I knew, to have embraced deadly errors, and yet are now deep in the abyss of unbelief,—I see in that fact a most emphatic warning to us all to watch constantly, and pray earnestly and unceasingly, lest we be overcome with the numerous and powerful temptations by which we are beset, to give up all that is vital in the Gospel, but that our feet may be preserved in the strait and narrow way, by unflinching fidelity to the grand central truths of the Gospel, which, when firmly held and fondly cherished, will most surely lead to life eternal.

These are “DUTIES” which every Christian, whether in the ministry, or in the private relations of life, owes to himself. But there are “DUTIES” which we all, in our collective capacity, owe to the cause of Christ. It is much to be lamented that believers in Jesus should be so passive at a time when His religion is so furiously assailed from all quarters, by the enemies of the Cross. Their combination is complete, and their active enmity to Christ and his cause knows not a moment’s intermission. Surely, then, it is

a reproach to us, and, let me add, a great and grievous sin on our part, bearing as we do the name of Jesus, and professedly acknowledging Him to be our Lord and Master,—that we look on with folded arms while we witness daily the fearful fruits of perhaps the most formidable conspiracy which ever yet was formed against the religion of Christ. Let us no longer lie under this grave charge, but, while each of us individually does all in our power for Christ and his cause, let us meet as one compact Christian brotherhood to confront the common foe. And if our prayers are fervent, our faith is strong, and our efforts are as zealous and persevering in opposition to the enemies of the Cross, as they ought to be, we shall most surely come off victorious in the end; and, it may be, at a much less distant date than any of us venture to anticipate. Who, therefore, is on the Lord's side, let him come forth,—come forth boldly and at once. It will be a glorious thing to be found fighting in the front of this great battle for the faith once delivered to the saints, and more glorious still to be sharers in the triumph, which is, sooner or later, as certain to be achieved, as God is faithful to His promises.

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